

CLAUD GOLDING

From
Versailles
to
Danzig

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Armistice

At sundown on November 7th, 1918, a cavalcade of motor-cars passed through the German lines near La Capelle, and halted in no-man's-land.

Fluttering from the window of the leading car was a white flag. The pandemonium of gunfire ceased.

They resumed their way slowly, bumpily, over the shell-shattered ground, and approached the French lines.

A few hundred yards along a narrow country lane they were suddenly halted. A French officer and a bugler entered the first car.

On once more.

The golden glow in the west had turned to a deep purple. Gloom began to settle down over the countryside. Soon the dimmed lights of the cars illuminated the sombre walls of an old castle. They turned into the flagged courtyard.

A long wait. A brilliant moon rose higher and shortened the shadows of the turrets.

At length the clatter of heels. Curtly the occupants were told to alight and get into other cars—sumptuous and more comfortable—belonging to the French army.

On again through the bright moonlight, and in and out of the shadows. A French officer was now in each vehicle.

They passed gaunt ruins that were merely tottering walls.

By stunted oaks and elms whose branches had been ripped off by projectiles. Over ground with holes big enough to bury a motor-car.

Hours passed. The passengers gazed gloomily out of the windows. They could see little but desolation.

At midnight came another stop. Around a small house, half of it shot away, there was activity. The passengers were led inside. Hot drinks were served.

Back to the cars and on again; through lanes that seemed to twist back on themselves, along muddy roads churned up by tanks and lorries.

At last a railway station, or the remains of one.

The travellers were conducted to a railway coach. Window-blinds were drawn. There was to be no prying.

Grey streaks were appearing in the east as they resumed their journey. Finally at 9 a.m. the train arrived at a clearing in the Forest of Compiègne.

A peremptory order from a French officer, and the travellers were conducted to another railway coach stationary near by.

Entered first into the coach Matthias Erzberger, leader of the German delegation. He was followed by Count von Oberndorff, Envoy Extraordinary, Major-General von Winterfelt, and Captain Vanselow of the German Navy.

"Sit down, gentlemen!"

The compartment contained a plain deal table; on it pencils and paper, around it chairs.

It was 9 a.m. November 8th, 1918.

Silently the delegates sat. Almost immediately there entered Marshal Foch, General Weygand with members of the French Staff, and Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss and the British Naval Staff.

Greetings were formal, cold.

"Ask these gentlemen what they want!" It was the harsh voice of Foch.

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The interpreter passed on the question, in more conciliatory tones, perhaps.

"We have come to accept the proposals of the Allied Powers for an armistice," said Matthias Erzberger.

Proposals! Had the interpreter slipped up?

"I have no proposals to make—tell these gentlemen so!" barked Foch.

He arose, pushed back his chair, and prepared to leave the compartment.

The Germans gazed at him with dismay. Erzberger turned pale. But Oberndorff was equal to the occasion. Addressing Foch in French he said, "Monsieur le Maréchal; this seems to me too serious a moment to argue about words. How would you that we should explain ourselves? It is a matter of indifference to us."

Foch turned to the interpreter. "Ask these gentlemen to say what they want," he rapped out.

Oberndorff replied: "As you know, Monsieur le Maréchal, we are here on the strength of a note from the President of the United States which, with your permission, I will read out."

Foch seemed only mildly interested in the document.

"If I have translated it correctly," proceeded Oberndorff, "that means that you desire to communicate armistice conditions to us."

Some of those present had to admit to themselves that there was little variation in the phraseology, but Foch seemed satisfied.

"All right," he said gruffly.

Turning to General Weygand, he nodded. The latter began to read from a document thirty-four points of armistice terms.

By the time the General had finished, the Germans felt as if the bottom of the world had dropped out.

They were given seventy-two hours to make a decision.

FROM VERSAILLES TO DANZIG

Withdrawing to another compartment, they pondered the situation. They read and re-read the paper that General Weygand had handed them.

Diabolical! Impossible! It would imperil the Reich. Germany would never submit to such terms. At all events, the delegates could not undertake to sign an armistice of this kind. The Imperial Government must be consulted.

The Imperial Government! Was there still an Imperial Government?

The German delegates had left the headquarters at Spa more than twelve hours before. A lot can happen—and did—in twelve hours.

They knew the German people were in revolt. They knew that the Red Flag fluttered from many a staff. But they did not know the strength of the rebellion. Erzberger and his colleagues took it for granted that the Imperial Government, with Prince Max of Baden as Chancellor, still existed.

So they must go back to Spa for instructions. They discussed the matter, and finally decided to send one of the staff, Captain von Helldorf, and an assistant secretary.

The two men made for the German lines, where they were at first greeted with a hail of bullets. After much difficulty they explained their mission *gman 5 Feb*

The same evening Count Oberndorff called on General Weygand. *French*

"I fear, General," he said, "that negotiations are not progressing satisfactorily."

"Very well," replied Weygand. "I am prepared to talk it over. What is the matter?"

"We expected hard conditions," complained Oberndorff, "but not so harsh as these."

Weygand would not agree that the terms were harsh. "Put into writing your complaints," he suggested.

General von Winterfeldt, representing the German Army, wanted certain points clarified. Captain Vanselow, of the

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German Navy, had his difficulties too. But when all their doubts were removed, it did not make the conditions less severe.

Every point was discussed, re-discussed, and threshed out to the smallest detail. Finally, a long memo was drafted by the Germans, setting out their objections to the terms.

"Haven't you finished yet?" demanded Foch, coming into the compartment. "I'll give you another quarter of an hour. If you have not finished by then, I will finish the business, in five minutes."

Nevertheless, he left the German delegates to themselves for two days, during which nothing was heard of the messengers from Spa headquarters.

The Germans asked for an extension of the time.

"Not a minute longer than seventy-two hours," insisted Foch.

It is not surprising that the messengers did not return from Spa. A wireless message, arriving on the night of the 10th, authorized Erzberger and Oberndorff to sign.

Coincident with the drama at Foch's headquarters, one more intense, more poignant, was occurring at Spa.

Picture an old château in extensive, wooded grounds—the Château de la Frainceuse.

The surrounding trees had a fair covering of yellow and brown, but gusts of wind were bringing the leaves down in showers. They pattered gloomily on the carpet made by their fellows below.

In the great hall of the château a log fire crackled. It was the only cheery thing in the mansion. All else was gloom and despair.

The German High Command were in session, a session that seemed to have no end. It had already lasted two or three weeks. They discussed, and were discussing still, the question: Should William II abdicate?

With a stubbornness characteristic of the Hohenzollerns,

the Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia had refused to see the danger signal. Some among his entourage, too, could not believe that the end had come.

It could not be true that the proud empire built by the Iron Chancellor was tottering to its fall. It was surely only a temporary lapse, growing pains indicating that Germany would sprout anew. All this dissension, this clamour, this demand for a republic, or a Communist government, did not represent the will of the German people.

So argued the Kaiser, and a few of the diehards.

Smash the Revolution! That was the Kaiser's oft-reiterated injunction. But some of the army leaders, notably Field-Marshal Hindenburg, knew there was not a chance.

On November 7th Scheidemann and Ebert, leaders of the Social Democrats, had presented an ultimatum demanding the abdication of William II and the Crown Prince before midday on the 8th. Alternative was revolution. The revolution, indeed, had already begun. Abdication might arrest it.

Prince Max of Baden, Imperial Chancellor, had told the Kaiser that he must go. William's refusal brought a message from Prince Max, tendering his resignation.

"Don't try to form an alternative government," he advised. "The country will not tolerate a military dictatorship."

It was midday on November 8th. Messages received from the interior disclosed that mutinies were occurring all over the country. Some of the mutineers favoured a Social Democratic government. Others had gone completely over to the Communists.

An hour later a further imperative demand for abdication came from Prince Max. Admiral von Hintz rang the Chancellor on the telephone. "When shall we abdicate?" he asked.

It was a superfluous inquiry. "Immediately," replied Prince Max curtly. "Urge His Majesty to go at once."

Von Hintz disliked the task. The Emperor was in a truculent mood.

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He sought out Marshal Hindenburg and General Groener, Quartermaster-General of the Forces.

"Come with me to deliver the message," he pleaded.

Hindenburg and Groener refused.

So it was that von Hintz took with him a junior member of the Staff.

The Emperor stood with his back to the fire gazing vacantly through the window. He read Prince Max's telegram. "I have no thought of abdication; tell Prince Max so."

He was determined not to be driven from his throne. Nothing would shake his conviction that a vigorous military assault on the revolutionaries would break the rebellion.

The afternoon wore on. Everything stood still at Spa. But the guns at the front continued to spit out death.

The gaps in the ranks widened, as men turned their backs on the filth and stench of the trenches and stole silently away with their rifles.

Once more darkness descended on the château. Eight o'clock came, and still no decision had been made by the Kaiser to abdicate, or by the High Command to scheme an attack on the revolutionary mob.

The telephone bell rang. It was Prince Max of Baden. He insisted upon speaking to the Kaiser.

"There is no time to be lost," he argued; "the abdication must take place at once."

In an irritated voice, William II declared that he would do nothing of the kind.

"But," urged the Chancellor, "it might save Germany from the English jingoes, and give us a better peace. You have also declared your mission as a peacemaker. Here is an opportunity to prove your sincerity. If civil war can be saved, you will be blessed by future generations. If you refuse, neither the German princes nor I can save you."

No one knows the thoughts that were running through

the mind of William II at that moment. A century and a quarter before Louis XVI had been in a similar predicament. His obstinacy brought the tragic scene at the Place de la Révolution. If the Kaiser thought of that ill-fated monarch, it merely helped his determination to resist.

"I will restore order at the head of the army," he told Prince Max.

It must have brought an ironical smile to the lips of the Chancellor.

What were those fools at Spa doing? Could not they as heads of the fighting forces realize that they no longer had control of the men?

It was perplexing to Prince Max, who, every moment, was receiving reports of rebellions in all the large cities.

He offered to resign. The Kaiser refused to accept his resignation, and ordered him to remain at his post.

Despairingly Prince Max rang off. But later that night he made one more attempt to make the Kaiser see reason.

The King of Bavaria and the Duke of Brunswick had fallen. A majority of the Cabinet were in favour of abdication. If the Emperor held out any longer, there would be no parliamentary majority.

"For your own sake, go to Holland," he pleaded.

Rioting had begun in Berlin. Women who had waited in food queues all day mingled with the men in the streets and demonstrated in the Wilhelmstrasse. Missiles were thrown at the police. The women had become viragos through months of semi-starvation. After pleading for food with patience, that patience was now exhausted.

Cologne, Coblenz and Mainz were in rebellion, Kiel had formed Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Drifting into the Rhine towns from the firing line were dirty, bedraggled, lousy, half-clad wretches, trailing rifles and threatening to use them.

They brought news to the towns that the French, British

and Americans were advancing relentlessly. Rebel troops occupied the Rhine bridgeheads.

So passed the night of November 7th.

And while the sinister rumble of a coming terror was heard in the large towns, peace settled down over the château at Spa.

But few slept. Certainly not William II, though the more he contemplated the prospect of abdication, the more he was determined to stay and face it out.

Morning dawned wet and foggy.

There was early activity in the château. Telegrams had already arrived. William II read them, and made uncomplimentary comments on the new Socialist government that had been formed in Berlin, though not yet proclaimed.

Once more the High Command assembled under even less auspicious circumstances than on the previous day.

The heavy mist condensed on the trees and the eaves of the château, and raindrops pattered on the fallen leaves.

But now, however, the Kaiser was convinced that Germany could not continue the war. Yet there was always the possibility of a favourable peace on the plea that without a strong Germany, Communism would sweep Europe.

The Emperor was a little vague as to what Communism really was. He discussed it with Major Niemann, one of his personal officers. At the end of that talk he had nothing but contempt for Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, and was certain that they could overcome all difficulties by swift military action.

Bolshevism was the great enemy of Britain and France as well as of Germany. William saw a way to an easy peace.

The generals had other views. They knew that the Allies would insist upon the Kaiser's abdication as a preliminary to the discussion of an armistice. The German people were clamouring for the head of the Kaiser. All was lost, and the generals were candid now in their advice to William.

The Emperor argued. Marshal Hindenburg tendered his resignation.

A twinge of pain passed over the features of William II. It was not altogether the defection of Hindenburg. The sciatic nerve in one of the Imperial legs had been troublesome of late. Exposure to the cold and damp at Spa—for he had insisted upon being with the army—had brought on an acute attack.

The Kaiser rubbed his painful leg as he stood in his favourite position with his back to the log fire.

Then Chief Quartermaster-General Groener spoke so earnestly and fluently that it produced an extraordinary effect. William was speechless. A look of perplexity took the place of the pain spasm.

It was the first time that he had realized that the situation was serious. The others were absorbed in gloomy reflection.

The Kaiser left the fire and began to pace up and down, limping a little with the pain. They had nothing but pity for him. They would have given their lives for him if it were possible.

Count Schulenberg was the only one among them who believed there was still a chance. He proceeded to outline a plan for crushing the rebels.

The Kaiser's face brightened, and he paused in his walk. "Very well," he said, with an apparent return to his normal brusqueness; "question all the army commanders as to the morale of the men. If as is said, they are no longer with us, then I will go. Till then I stay."

With a curt nod he left them and went out into the garden, risking further ills, for a relentless drizzle was now falling.

The Crown Prince followed him and spoke words of consolation. It was comforting to feel that one's son had confidence in his father.

It was an hour before noon. Courier after courier had

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arrived with news concerning the troops. Not one of them carried hope.

The Kaiser and his generals paced the lawn. The argument waxed acrimonious. Impatiently William tried to put them off.

Abdicate! Nonsense! He would not abdicate.

They told him he must. The troops would not march against the revolutionaries. The soldiers of the "All-Highest" wanted no more of the Hohenzollerns.

"All right!" Still clutching a straw, he agreed to go if the German people desired it.

He was not destined to wait long for their opinion. At 1.15 came a message from Prince Max announcing that the situation was grave.

"As Emperor, but not as King of Prussia," pleaded William.

They produced a paper. He signed it. It was his abdication as Emperor.

Came another message from the Chancellor. He had proclaimed William Hohenzollern's abdication in Berlin, both as Emperor and King.

"My Chancellor has done this to me!" exclaimed the unfortunate monarch.

In despair he seized one telegram form after another and filled them up. "I will not give up the Crown of Prussia," he cried.

They watched these fruitless efforts, but could do nothing. Some tried to soothe him, but it was like offering a bone to a cornered mad dog.

"I will go!" . . . "I will not go!"

How many times he had made those contrary declarations throughout the afternoon it is hard to say.

The gloom of twilight stole over the château once more. The lights were switched on. William II continued to pace the hall, arguing and sometimes pleading.

"Go to Holland—at once . . . *at once!*" was all he could get out of the generals.

Hours passed. The argument continued. At length at 7.30 he muttered, "I will go."

He ordered his things to be taken to the train that had been waiting for him some days.

At 7.40 he changed his mind. "I will remain with the army," he insisted.

At eight o'clock he seemed cooler and more confident. Again he abandoned the thoughts of abdication, though he remained in the car.

They left him to his own meditations.

At ten o'clock he got up and left the dining-car.

They urged him to go back. News had come that the rebels were marching on the Spa headquarters. The situation was now desperate and beyond control.

"Very well, but not until the morning," said William II.

He returned to the coach. The generals left him there and went back to the château.

Early next morning, November 10th, Admiral von Hintz went to the railway station.

✓There was no train, no Emperor.

At 4.30 he had given orders for the train to proceed, without so much as a simple "Good-bye!" to his staff.

Admiral von Hintz stared into the darkness. Of course, there was no sign of the train.

He turned and walked slowly back to the château, across ground that squelched as he walked.

"The Emperor has gone!" he announced to the others.

They gazed gloomily at each other. But not a word was said for many minutes.

It was the Sabbath Day. And as the dawn broke on this cold November morning, the Imperial train containing William Hohenzollern, ex-Emperor of Germany, and King of Prussia, crossed the frontier into exile—but also sanctuary.

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The Emperor having gone, the Spa headquarters discussed the armistice terms. The discussion lasted all day. Field-Marshal Hindenburg had much to say about the harsh terms.

But it seemed inevitable that the Allies would not compromise. It was pointless to refuse to sign in view of the state of Germany. The German people wanted peace, it seemed, at any price.

So the wireless message went out to Matthias Erzberger and Count Oberndorff. It said "Sign!"

At the same time they were instructed to register a protest against the terms, which were not, alleged the Germans, in accordance with the Fourteen Points laid down by President Wilson.

A telegram from the Chancellor of the Reich also instructed the plenipotentiaries to affix their signatures to the document.

Once more, therefore, both sides met in the railway coach. They talked from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m.

They might have talked until doomsday. The terms were irrevocable.

Germany capitulated completely and unconditionally. The document was signed.

Six hours passed before the guns were silenced.

Germany was apparently powerless and at the mercy of the Allies.

But, from the moment that the peace pen was put to the paper, Germany was determined to repudiate her signature.

There might be revolution, there might be changes of government; but whether the rulers were Hohenzollerns, Communists, Social Democrats, Republicans, or the racketeers who eventually precipitated the second great war, the slogan would have been, as it still is, "Revenge!"

Chapter 2

Versailles

The liner *George Washington* ploughed her way across the Atlantic with her distinguished passenger.

It was the first week of December, 1918, a month after the Armistice.

✓The Mills of God had ground relentlessly for four years. False gods lay shattered. The world had lost its faith in the true God, for saints and sinners alike had been overwhelmed.

Now Thomas Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, author of the Fourteen Points, self-imposed peacemaker, was on his way to Europe. Martyred mankind had clothed him with a glamour of righteousness.

Peace had come. Wilson would render justice.

In his hands the Mills of God would be reversed. Stricken mankind demanded it; the souls of millions insisted upon it. The earth was to be purified, rejuvenated. The lion would soon lie down with the lamb, swords would become ploughshares, tanks would become tractors.

The Fourteen Points had gone out from the White House like a papal bull. Warring nations were suffering the extremes of agony. It was an attempt to nail the old gang of politicians down to a peace with honour. And, thought Wilson the Peacemaker, if the leaders would not subscribe to his ideals, he would appeal to the people themselves.

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How thoughtful it was of Thomas Woodrow Wilson to provide the straw which the defeated side could, if necessary, clutch in its extremity! But the Central Powers were not then beaten. Germany had one more thrust to make, though her starved millions were seething with unrest under pressure of the blockade. Austria-Hungary's sun was setting behind storm-laden clouds. Bulgaria was shattered. Turkey, the "Sick man of Europe," was trying to stifle the death rattle in the throat. The Allies themselves were dying from anaemia.

Put into practice the Fourteen Points meant the end of war, the brotherhood of nations, the abandonment of armaments, the freedom of all peoples, the denouncement of secret diplomacy; in short, Utopia.

But the Fourteen Points did not bring the war to an end. Germany was preparing for the great offensive of March, 1918. The Allies were preparing to shatter that offensive. The belligerents figuratively raised their hats in acknowledgment, and continued the sordid task of blood-letting.

Germany was glad to hold the Fourteen Points in reserve until the great gamble of March was decided. The Allies had the same thought in mind.

Thus nothing was done to bring the war to an end. Pigeon-holed was the President's "glorious message of peace."

It was Germany who eventually sued for a cessation of hostilities. And when the German delegation met Foch and his colleagues in the railway saloon in the Forest of Compiègne on November 8, 1918, they asked for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points.

Germany claims that she was betrayed at the Peace Conference, that Wilson was sidetracked. Politicians of all countries, except those that were created out of the treaties, have condemned the terms forced on Germany as being harsh and humiliating to a great country. They argue that the present war is a relic of Versailles.

Yet, is it? Judge for yourself, after you have read the dramatic history of the last twenty years.

Back to the Ark of Peace.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson frequently gazed out upon the swirling waters of the Atlantic, and pondered.

Could he force home those Fourteen Points? Were they not a little too Utopian for European digestion? Could the Old World be prevailed upon by the New to relinquish the luxury of war for the settlement of disputes?

The nearer the *George Washington* got to France, the more Thomas Woodrow Wilson doubted.

They had told him before he left America that he might be dragged into acrimonious disputes. But the Old World had asked him to the Peace Conference to give his interpretation of the Fourteen Points. He could not ignore such a gesture from Europe.

Yet, he admitted to himself, as he meditated on the deck of the *George Washington*, Europe must have problems he could not understand.

One night, after long and lonely contemplation of his mission, he said to his colleagues who were accompanying him, "Show me what is right, and I will fight for it; present me with a strong position."

On another occasion he declared, "What my spirit seems to me—and I earnestly hope I may be mistaken—is a tragedy of disappointments."

Why did he say this? Two days before his departure from the United States he had said in Congress, "The Allied Governments have, like the Central Powers, accepted the principles of peace, which I enumerated to Congress on January 8th of this year. . . ."

Why, then, his doubts?

The answer is to be found in a document which Thomas Woodrow Wilson had even then in the ship's safe. Handed to him just before sailing, it was addressed from the

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French Government to the United States Secretary of State. It contained such phrases as this: "The arrival of President Wilson in Paris in the middle of December will enable the four Great Powers to agree among themselves upon the conditions of the peace preliminaries to be imposed severally on the enemy without any discussion with him . . ."

Here is another phrase:

“The peace preliminaries with Germany will furthermore shape the way for the settlement of the main territorial restorations: Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, the Slav countries, Belgium, Luxembourg, the cession of the German colonies, the full recognition of the protectorates of France over Morocco, and of England over Egypt; the provisional acceptance of the constitution of the new independent states out of the territories of the former Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires, as well as the conclusion of the treaties signed among the Allies with Bulgaria; and about Turkey, the abrogation of the Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest treaties, and of all the previous conventions with Russia and Rumania. . . .”

Finally, dealing with the countries to be represented at the Peace Conference, the communication concluded: “As for the neutrals and States in formation, they may be called when their own interests are at stake.”

That was why the Peacemaker was depressed. Had America intervened in vain? he asked himself. Had the Great Western Republic sent her millions to save European civilization, to lift it out of depravity and ruin, all to no purpose?

Sometimes Wilson had the courage to say to himself, “No; it shall not be in vain.” And to his colleagues he would declare, “We want a say in this peace!”

Yet it was still in that doubtful frame of mind that he arrived in France.

Of course, he was fêted everywhere. He went to England and was fêted still more. In Italy they idolized him. What for? Because Number Nine in the Fourteen Points provided for the readjustment of the frontiers of Italy on lines of nationality and the Italians had already interpreted that clause as meaning the acquisition of chunks of territory.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson felt a little better after these peregrinations. Europe was really in earnest. And although he was still a little confused when he took his seat at the first meeting of the peace preliminaries at the French Foreign Office, he was optimistic enough to think that he would dominate the discussions.

He soon saw his mistake. At once he was plunged into the depths of gloom by the opening speech of Raymond Poincaré. Germany was guilty of the war. That was Poincaré's first utterance. France had not sought it. That was his second.

Intently did Wilson follow the remainder of that peroration. Justice . . . violations . . . restitutions . . . reparations . . . despoliation . . . maltreatment . . . punishment of the guilty . . . effective guarantees. These words fell like hammer blows as Poincaré became more and more incensed against Germany.

Wilson's optimism rose a little when Poincaré declared that there must be no conquest, no imperialism, no arbitrary exchange of provinces "between States, as though peoples were but articles of furniture or pawns in a game."

And he nodded his head with approval at the words: "The time is no more when diplomatists could meet to redraw with authority the map of the empire on the corner of a table."

Nothing could be better, in the opinion of the American President, when Poincaré laid down the principles: "If you are to remark the map of the world, it is in the name of the peoples and on condition that you shall faithfully interpret

their thoughts, and respect the right of nations, small and great, to dispose of themselves . . .”

Still better was Poincaré's declaration that the Peace Conference would establish a general League of Nations. This looked promising for the Fourteen Points.

But wait! What is it that the speaker now says? His voice rises to a crescendo, and vibrates with emotion:

“This very day, forty-eight years ago, on January 18th, 1871, the German Empire was proclaimed by an army of invasion in the château at Versailles. It was consecrated by the theft of the two French provinces. It was thus vitiated from its origin, and by the default of the founders; born in injustice, it has ended in approbrium. You are assembled in order to repair the evil that it has done, and to prevent a recurrence of it. . . .”

The Apostle of Peace felt a little sick. It was true, after all; he did not understand Europe. There was a difference between the great Republic of France, and the Republic of America.

But with all his experience, Thomas Woodrow Wilson could not see what that difference was. Any Frenchman could have told him. Even an Englishman could have explained.

“Then occurred a breach of faith without parallel in the history of the world!” shrieks a German writer.

Elected President of the Conference was “Tiger” Clemenceau. Woodrow Wilson was destined to see that squat, pugnacious figure on many occasions, and to sample his fighting qualities.

Wilson wanted his pet scheme of the League of Nations discussed. Clemenceau wanted to talk about the security of France. French security! What was French security in the larger issues of the world? The United States President could not understand it. He wanted to fight the battle for a Golden Age. Forget old sores, he implored them. They insisted upon

French security first. Wilson got irritated, then condemnatory.

The first great issue came when Germany asked for the raising of the blockade. It came to a head in March, after the German peace delegates had declared: "We make sacrifice upon sacrifice and, by surrendering our possessions, we have reached the limit of poverty. We do not want to be presented with the foodstuffs that we need. We want to buy them. In spite of everything supplies are constantly postponed, and in the meantime we suffer from Famine. If the Entente wants to destroy us, it should at any rate not expect us to dig our graves."

It was a moving appeal, which made some of the delegates feel uncomfortable. The Germans refused to surrender their mercantile marine, under the Armistice conditions, until a food scheme was drawn up.

Stormy meetings in the Peace Council. Supporting the Americans against the French was Mr. Lloyd George. "The methods applied by the food blockade are entirely immoral," he declared. "I have not the feeling that it is compatible with our national honour and dignity to continue to look on. I should like to give the conference a solemn warning of the tremendous consequences which would result from the total collapse of the social system of Europe."

Finally the French were overruled. Germany was given permission to import 3,000 tons of grain and 70,000 tons of fats a month in return for the surrender of her mercantile marine.

The gruesome story has to be told. It has been condemned time after time. There was haggling, bargaining, the production of false reports, distortions of expert opinions, and secret meetings behind closed doors. Thomas Woodrow Wilson looked on amazed. It was secret diplomacy at its worst; the very course that he had tried to obviate in the first of his Fourteen Points which had condemned secret treaties and private international understandings.

Wilson fought and fought. But the vision of a glorious to-morrow receded.

Two great foes faced each other—Wilson and Clemenceau. Both were physically ill, but they fought like mediaeval opponents; the first for a better world, the second for the security of his country.

Both men rose out of their physical shells to lampoon each other. Both retired into their shells after each contest was over with so much less vitality. The "Tiger" almost eighty, and the sixty-three-year-old President frittered their lives away at Versailles.

At the end of March it looked as if the Conference would collapse. American officials wrote home declaring that the situation was unbearable.

There were talks about a campaign against Russia to abolish Bolshevism, in contravention of Number Six of the Fourteen Points which declared that Russia was to be left to determine her own political development and national policy, and to be welcomed into the Society of Nations. Two in favour of this campaign were Mr. Winston Churchill and Marshal Foch.

Further quarrels developed over the creation of a "Rhine Republic", the cession of Danzig to Poland, and the prevention of an Anschluss of Austria with Germany, and reparations.

By the end of March the situation was intolerable. The French wanted the Saar Territory. The President stubbornly opposed annexation. Fruitless discussions followed, with the "Tiger" refusing to concede an inch, and Wilson just as determined to stand his ground.

"Pro-German!" hissed Clemenceau.

Wilson gazed at him with scorn. "If France does not get what she wants, she refuses to co-operate with us," he retorted. "Would you rather that I should return home?"

On that occasion Woodrow Wilson collapsed physically. He was ill and a disillusioned man.

Then a breeze blew up between Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George. The final peace terms were ready to be drafted despite Wilson's opposition, when the British Premier decided to get a clarification of certain points before it was too late. He wanted to be certain that the terms imposed on the Germans would not engender future wars.

It was easy, he said, to patch up a peace that would last for thirty years. But it was extremely difficult to draw up a peace that would endure.

"You may strip Germany of her colonies," he declared in a statement, "reduce her armaments to a mere police force, and her navy to that of a fifth-rate Power. All the same in the end, if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the peace of 1919, she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors. The impression, the deep impression, made upon the human heart by four years of unexampled slaughter will disappear with the hearts upon which it has been marked by the terrible sword of the Great War. . . . Our terms may be severe, they may be stern and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain. But justice, arrogance, displayed in the hour of triumph will never be forgotten or forgiven."

Prophetic words!

Mr. Lloyd George objected to transferring Germans from German rule to the rule of some other nation. He could not conceive Germany being surrounded by small States, many of them consisting of people who have never previously set up a stable government for themselves, but each of them containing large masses of Germans clamouring for reunion with their native land."

And here is the Welsh Wizard again:

"The Poles had asked for territory that included over two

million Germans. Were these to be placed "under the control of a people which had never proved its capacity for stable self-government throughout its history"? In his judgment such a course would lead sooner or later to a new war in the east of Europe.

The alternative to a just peace was Bolshevism.

"To my mind," continued Mr. Lloyd George, "it is idle to endeavour to impose a permanent limitation of armaments upon Germany unless we are prepared similarly to impose a limitation upon ourselves. If the small nations are permitted to organize and maintain conscript armies running each to hundreds of thousands, boundary wars will be inevitable and all Europe will be drawn in. Unless we secure this universal limitation we shall neither achieve lasting peace nor the permanent observance of the limitation of German armaments which we now seek to impose."¹

To that note "Tiger" Clemenceau replied characteristically that the blow Germany would feel the most was the one already dealt her under the Armistice conditions, namely, the loss of her navy, her colonies, and the greater part of her mercantile marine. Which, in effect, was a sly dig at Britain who had secured these benefits out of the Armistice conditions.

Mr. Lloyd George retorted that he claimed nothing for Britain which France would not equally get. The war had cost Britain as much as France, he argued. But France would get twice as much of the indemnity. "If my proposals seem to M. Clemenceau to favour Britain, it is because I was, until I read this document, under the delusion that France also attached importance to colonies, to ships, to compensation, to disarmament, to Syria, and to a British guarantee to stand by France with all her strength if she were attacked. I regret my error and shall be careful not to repeat it."²

This sarcasm was lost on Clemenceau, and nothing came of the correspondence.

*Meanwhile Wilson was not on speaking terms with the "Tiger." When someone suggested to Clemenceau that he should talk to the President about a certain point, the peppery old fighter exclaimed, "Talk to Wilson! How can I talk to a fellow who regards himself the greatest man for the past two thousand years, and who knows nothing about peace?"

Soon after that Wilson threatened, "If my principles are not adopted without change, I will order the *George Washington* immediately and return home."⁴

A day or two afterwards Wilson determined to send an ultimatum. But an attack of influenza intervened, and he was in bed for four days. During that period the situation changed. So much so, that the President ordered the *George Washington* to proceed to France at once to take him home. [‡]He changed his mind. And in so doing, he saved at least one Point of his Fourteen.

It was the League of Nations.⁴

He went back to America finally hoping that the peoples of all countries would demand ultimately what their representatives were not willing to concede on their behalf.

On April 18th, 1918, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, German Foreign Minister, received a curt intimation from the Allies that they were ready to hand him the peace terms.

The Germans allege that the Allies did not even deign to recognize the existence in Paris of the German peace delegation. The fact was, they had called the Count too soon. They had not yet dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's" of the peace terms.

At length on May 7th, "Tiger" Clemenceau handed the document to the Germans with such phrases as: "This is neither the place nor the time for superfluous words. . . . The hour of reckoning has come. . . . We hand you the book of peace. . . . The second Peace of Versailles has been bought too dearly by us for us to agree to take upon ourselves alone the consequences of this war."

A thick book was placed upon the table before the German delegates. M. Clemenceau gave them fourteen days to consider them. But the struggle made by the Germans to avoid signing the Treaty lasted six weeks.

*A day after the terms were handed to the visitors, Ebert, President of the German Republic, issued a proclamation to the people which contained the first threat of the repudiation of Versailles, though the Treaty was not then signed.

"The German people laid down their arms and honourably carried out all the undertakings given at the time of the Armistice, onerous as the undertakings were. In spite of this our adversaries continued the war for six months by maintaining the hunger blockade." The German people bore all the burdens, trusting in the promise contained in the Allies' note of November 5th, that the peace would be a peace of justice based on Wilson's Fourteen Points.

"What we have now been offered in the peace conditions in place of that is contrary to the promise given, intolerable for the German people, and with the best will in the world impossible of fulfilment." Measureless and limitless violence is to be done to the German people. Such a dictated peace would inevitably stir up fresh hatred among the nations and eventually lead to a fresh massacre.†

There was a great deal more. Germany would be fettered; the workers would become slaves. It was a peace of violence, and so on. It was a call to the German people to wait patiently for their revenge which would surely come in time. No other construction can be put upon that manifesto. From that moment, even before the Treaty was signed, the people of Germany determined to wipe out those ignominious terms, and get their own back with interest.

The subsequent negotiations—or rather protests on the part of the Germans—were prolonged. Many notes passed between the two sides.† Marshal Foch got impatient and threatened to march into Germany.‡

Did the Peace Terms conform to the Fourteen Points? It depends upon the point of view. From the point of view of France they did. The Germans thought otherwise. Premier Jan Smuts of South Africa thought the Germans made out a good case "in regard to a number of provisions." There were pinpricks in the Treaty which were against the letter and the spirit of the Points. He told Thomas Woodrow Wilson so.

"I cannot find anything in the Points which would cover, for instance, the one-sided internationalism of German rivers. . . . I even doubt whether the occupation of the Rhine for fifteen years could be squared either with the letter or the spirit of your Points."

The Allies at length issued a memorandum in which they declared, "These are the principles on which the hostilities were abandoned in November 1918. These are the principles upon which the Allied and Associated Powers agreed that peace might be based; these are the principles which have guided them in the deliberations which have led to the formation of the conditions of peace."

That was enough. If Germany did not like it, she had her choice. The Allies would occupy her territory. Germany gave in.

Here are the peace terms:

Cession of Alsace-Lorraine to France.

Cession of Eupen-Malmedy to Belgium, after a plebiscite.

Cession of part of the province of Posen and West Prussia, and parts of East Prussia and Silesia to Poland, a plebiscite being held in certain cases.

Cession of North Schleswig to Denmark, after a plebiscite.

Separation of Danzig from Germany, to be made a free city under the League of Nations, and the establishment of a Polish Corridor, cutting East Prussia from the Reich.

Separation of Memel Territory from Germany.

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Cession of German colonies to the Allies.

Saar coalfields to be administered by the League of Nations with a plebiscite after fifteen years.

Occupation of the left bank of the Rhine for fifteen years, with gradual evacuation after five years if Germany fulfilled her reparations undertakings.

Demilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine, with a 50 kilometre strip of territory on the right bank.

Restriction of Germany's army to 100,000, and her fleet to battleships of 10,000 tons.

Confiscation of a great part of Germany's mercantile fleet.

Abolition of the air force.

Admission by Germany of sole war guilt.

Prosecution of the Kaiser and others alleged to have brought about the war.

Reparations to be fixed by a Reparations Commission not later than May 1st, 1921.

These terms were not President Wilson's interpretation of his own Fourteen Points. He returned to America disillusioned. The Old World had made peace without the New World after all.

Wilson suffered severe criticism at home for having failed to bring back the peace he had gone to Europe to impose. When he gave up office as President in March, 1921, he was broken in health and spirit.

Many of those who took part in those conferences in Paris in 1919, felt twinges of consciences with the passing of the years. For they saw that the work they had achieved had come to naught.

And they must have asked themselves many and many a time: "Are we to blame for what has occurred since? Did we trample upon a fallen foe? Will posterity blame us for a new catastrophe?"

They have tried to backslide, to blame the other man instead of themselves. "I honestly thought at the time that

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we were too harsh. But we who wanted a just peace were in the minority," they have tried to excuse themselves.

Now that a new war has burst upon the world, or rather the old one has been continued, they are not so sure. You can read the doubt in their speeches and in their writings.

But if "Tiger" Clemenceau had lived to see a new war convulsing Europe, he would have said: "We should have settled them last time! I told you so!"

President Wilson did not know Germany. One country was able to judge the character of her neighbour. It was France.

Let us follow the tragic events that have led once more to a Great War.

Chapter 3

Revolution

Was the German Revolution real?

The working people had seized power; the Socialists had kicked out the Kaiser and his gang of imperialists. But, was the spirit of the Hohenzollerns dead?

That the German people were sincere in their anxiety to get rid of those who had led them to destruction is undoubted. They were weary and exhausted with four years of war, had sacrificed much; two millions had died in battle.

At the same time, had they learned their lesson?

Judged on subsequent events, the answer to that question is: No.

In the actual hour of their defeat they were proud of their achievements in keeping the Allies at bay for so long. They fully expected the Allies to say to them, "You were marvellous." It was in that spirit that the Armistice delegation met the Allied representatives. It was in that same spirit, despite their disappointment with the Armistice terms, that they went to Versailles, and met with a crushing disappointment.

✂ The German people had forgotten the passions with which they entered the war. They had forgotten their "hymns of hate." On the other hand the Allies had forgotten nothing, and that is what the Germans could not understand. They looked upon the war, after it was over, as a fight between

two pugilists. They expected the victor to shake hands, and commiserate with the vanquished.

America adopted the same attitude, and thought it an excellent opportunity for the Allies and Germany to get together, to forgive and forget. Americans could not believe that the country that had produced such profound thinkers, clever surgeons and scientists was not fundamentally sound.

But Americans had not lived next door to Germany, whose history, so far as her neighbours were concerned, held drama in which they themselves had played tragic, but subsidiary roles.

The Allies had no illusions as to what Germany's attitude would be to the Armistice and Peace terms. The arrogance of Germany had never had a setback; it had been intensified during two generations from Bismarck. That is why the German people could not comprehend the feelings of the Allied peoples.

* They did not believe themselves guilty for precipitating the war. Even when the great military machine lay silent, they could not believe that it was the Allies who had broken it. They thought they were entitled to a peace of reconciliation on the strength of what Germany had been in the past.

† When their soldiers returned from the fronts for demobilization—that is, those who did not actually revolt—they were welcomed back as if they were victors. You may argue that they were entitled to give their men a welcome home. I agree; but no defeated army in history ever received the acclamation which the Prussians gave their legions.

‡ Though German democracy was in control, though it sincerely desired peace, France could see that militarism was not dead. She therefore took the only sensible course, and made sure of the security of her frontiers.

§ Some of France's aged politicians had lived through two wars. They recalled the winter of 1870-71, the bombardment

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of Paris by the Krupp guns, the starvation in the city while the Prussian forces lay outside the gates. 33

Moreover, the Allies were not unmindful of what would have happened if the Germans had entered Paris in the Great War. There would have been little left of France and Belgium. Britain would have been called upon to make a heavy contribution in the dismemberment of her Empire, to hand over her navy, and completely disarm. Anyone who can contemplate a German peace on any other terms is a candidate for a strait-jacket.

Germany's chief argument was that the peace terms had been forced upon a nation unable to defend itself. That is true; no peace terms could be forced upon a nation able to defend itself. The Allies had reiterated time and again that they would not sheath the sword until the enemy was crushed. Germany ought to have known what to expect after the devastation her armies had committed, and the load of debt which the war had brought to her enemies.

34 If the war had ended earlier by Germany's internal collapse the Allies were fully entitled to take advantage of it. The Germans would certainly have taken advantage of revolutions in Allied countries.

Thus, we are entitled to regard the note which the German Peace Delegation sent to Georges Clemenceau a week before the signing of the Treaty, as typical of that old arrogance which the war had not dissipated. 35

It referred to "the efforts made by the Government of the German Republic in the interests of world peace, and the reconciliation of nations." It further declared that these efforts had been wrecked by the "obstinate maintenance of peace conditions."

It went on: "The Allied and Associated Governments have by an ultimatum which expires on June 23rd, presented the Government of the German Republic with the alternative of signing the Peace Treaty submitted to it, or refusing

to sign. In the latter eventuality, a completely defenceless nation would be threatened with the imposition by violence of the peace conditions demanded and the aggravation of the heavy burdens already laid upon it."

"The German nation does not desire the resumption of a sanguinary war; it honestly wishes for a durable peace. It has no weapon wherewith to counter the attitude of the Allied and Associated Powers except an appeal to its inalienable right to an independent life which it shares with all other nations."

The note concluded with the declaration that the Government of the German Republic were prepared to sign the Peace Treaty, but would not admit that the German people were responsible for the war.

I may be accused of pouring scorn on this pathetic appeal of the German people. But, a people always get the Government they deserve, and there is no reason to suppose that they, as represented by the new Republican rulers of Germany who negotiated the Peace terms, were more honest or sincere in their determination to create a Germany desirous of living in amity with her neighbours than they were under the Hohenzollerns and their Junker satellites.

The political records during the war of Friedrich Ebert, President of the Reich, Philip Scheidemann the Chancellor, Dernburg, Bauer, Bell, David, Matthias Erzberger, Gothein, Gustav Noske, Preuss, Wissel, and Schmidt, were not such as to inspire the Allies with confidence. Nor was there any hope that the Spartacists or Communists, would, in the event of a rise to power, have any friendly feelings towards Britain and her Allies, for Communism was based upon world revolution and that necessarily included the abolition of the British Empire.

To understand the situation that existed in Germany at the end of 1918, it is necessary to go back a few years.

Throughout the period of the war there were parties in

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Germany who had opposed it. Not, however, because they believed that Germany was in the wrong, but because they had ulterior motives in their opposition. Those motives were engendered by ambition to rule Germany themselves. Among those parties were the Spartacists, or Communists, whose object was an alliance with Russia, and the Socialists in various tints of red or pink.

Leaders of the Communists were Karl Liebknecht, and "Red Rosa" Luxemburg; among Socialists, Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann.

Details of the careers of these people are interesting.

Ebert, who was President of the Reich during the peace talks, was born in Heidelberg in February, 1871. He was educated at a local elementary school. His family were Catholic, and although in later years Ebert drifted towards religious scepticism, he retained some links with his childhood faith, as is the case with most Catholics who become free-thinkers.

He served his apprenticeship as a saddler, became a journeyman, and travelled all over Germany plying his trade. In the course of his wanderings he called at Bremen, and here he was introduced to the doctrines of Socialism, and became one of the party organizers.

In 1894 he was given charge of the local Socialist paper the Bremen *Bürgerzeitung*. After six years he resigned his editorship to become secretary of the Bremen branch of the party. At the same time he kept a restaurant where members met for their discussions.

The rise of the Socialist Party in Germany was coincident with its rise in most other countries, including Britain. In 1905, Ebert became secretary of the Berlin centre and organized the candidature of the Socialists for the Reichstag election. Ebert chose the Hanover district, but was beaten. In 1912 he was elected to the Reichstag for the first time for the district of Elberfeld-Barmen, with an overwhelming majority.

About 1913 Ebert was elected President of the Party, and held this post when war broke out. The Party was split on the question of the voting of war credits, and a minority went into opposition against the majority. Ebert remained head of the Majority, the aims of which were to prosecute the war on the plea that it was a war of defence.

The Minority promptly dubbed him "Kaiser's Socialist," and declared that he was trimming his sails to the prevailing wind.

Unquestionably Ebert was an opportunist. If opinion veered to the Left, Ebert would be there; if it veered to the right there, still, was Ebert.

At the same time, he was a zealous advocate of Germany's war of defence, and all his energies were thrown into the war effort. He opposed all strikes during the war. But in the munitions strikes of 1918 he appeared to support the strikers, though it has been said that his object was to secure control of the strike committees in order to lead them back to the legal paths of trade unionism. Moreover, he never gave up the hope that the Socialists would once again be reunited. Meanwhile the Left Socialists had been drifting still more to the Left, and Communism had arisen out of the Spartacus Union, itself an offshoot of Socialism, which adhered to the principles of Karl Marx.

¶ In September, 1918, when it seemed that Germany was almost certain to be defeated—for Bulgaria had collapsed and the Austro-Hungarian empire was in course of disintegration, Prince Max of Baden was made Imperial Chancellor and given powers to appoint a coalition Government. ¶

¶ The first Socialist to be asked to take part was Ebert. For some reason or other, however, he declined to serve and put forward Philip Scheidemann, the paperhanger, who had, almost since the outbreak of war, preached a "peace of understanding."

This so-called "Scheidemann Peace" was afterwards

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incorporated in certain appeals to the Government by the Socialists at various times during the war. This "Peace," however, did not mean capitulation to the Allies. The war was to be prosecuted until Germany was victorious, but the peace terms which the victors were to impose on the vanquished were to be without annexations or indemnities.

A lot can be said for the Social Democratic ideals of Scheidemann, and if Scheidemann had had the courage in 1919 to remain at his post as Chancellor, instead of resigning to obviate the necessity for signing the Peace Treaty, there might have been a different Germany to-day. Yet, I wonder.

To return to Ebert. In his refusal to accept office under Prince Max of Baden, Ebert was vacillating once more. He kept out of the Government, his supporters maintain, so that he could pilot the revolutionary element of the country back to sanity. Indeed, he is credited with believing in a limited type of monarchy after the British pattern.

I do not suggest that Ebert at this time was waiting for the cat to jump, but it looked very much like it. It was still uncertain whether the extreme Left, represented by the revolutionaries Liebknecht, Ledebour and Robert Schmidt, would achieve their aim of a Communist revolution, and the erection of a Bolshevik State on the lines of, and in alliance with, Moscow.

At all events, Ebert joined the earliest Workman's and Soldier's Council, and became leader. With him were Braun, Wels, Eugen, Ernst, and twelve representatives of the Berlin factories.

There soon followed a competition for leadership in which it was seen that the majority of the leaders were still "pink." The Majority had in their ranks most of the brains as exemplified by Ebert, Scheidemann and David. At the same time, there was an implication of dangerous opposition from the Spartacists who were advocates of physical force to secure

the revolution. It seemed that power might ultimately fall into their hands, as the German workers themselves looked askance at any milk-and-water policy.

Because for a moment to get acquainted with Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, for they were the pivot of the Communist "Revolution by force" policy.

Revolution was in Liebknecht's blood, which was as red as that of Lenin. Way back in 1848, another Liebknecht—Karl's father, Wilhelm—had led volunteers to Baden to establish a Republic. A vain attempt, sent him refugee to London. In 1870 his was a still small voice that protested against the Prussian campaign against France in that year.

He was imprisoned for *lèse majesté*.

If his son, Karl, were a chip of the old block, as indeed he was, you may be tempted to say, "Here was a hero!" You would be right, viewed from a certain angle—the angle of world revolution. But Karl Liebknecht had allied himself to Moscow.

Compared with Ebert, Karl Liebknecht was an educated man. He was a product of the Universities of Leipzig, Berlin, and Würzburg, a barrister, and had served his military service in the Prussian Guard.

In 1904 he defended Socialists charged at Königsberg with smuggling revolutionary literature into Russia, and in 1907 he received eighteen months' imprisonment for publishing a pamphlet entitled *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*.

He became a member of the Prussian Landtag in 1908, and the Potsdam Socialists returned him to the Reichstag in 1912. A year later he exposed the working of the Krupp armament trust, and although he refused to vote for the war credits in 1914 he served with a Labour Battalion on the Western and Russian fronts in the early days of the war. In April, 1916, he was expelled from the Reichstag for making a revolutionary speech while on leave, and later was

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sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment for various treasonable offences.

Liebnecht appeared in public again after the amnesty of October, 1918, which the German Government felt it necessary to grant because of the rising tide of the revolution.

Rosa Luxemburg was a Pole. In the early days of German Socialist propaganda, she was one of the leaders of International Socialism, who gathered at a café in Geneva to plot. They were a queer collection of refugees from all nations. She married a German and attained German nationality, merely because there were opportunities for Socialism in that country, or so it seemed. For in those days Russia was the last of the European nations likely to embrace Marxist doctrines.

Much of Rosa's revolutionary career was spent in gaols either in Russia or Germany.

In 1917 Rosa Luxemburg, despite privations under restraint, was imbued with fresh energy. Russia had gone Bolshevik, had carried the principles of Karl Marx right into the land of oppression, the last stronghold of the jack-boot that was really expected to fall. What Russia could do, so could Germany.

When the news of the October revolution startled a world that was able to appreciate its significance, Rosa Luxemburg lay in gaol in Breslau.

With the general amnesty she walked out of the dingy prison, and sharpened up her intellect for the coming encounter.

The die was cast between Red and Pink. The Hohenzollerns were going; there was no question about that. What form of Government Germany would ultimately adopt, depended upon the result of the fight.

At the beginning of October, 1918, both sides saw their opportunity.

On the 2nd, Field-Marshal Hindenburg arrived in Berlin

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to tell a gloomy story of the state of affairs at the Front. In the Reichstag was read a report of the military situation from the German High Command: "The enemy have an extraordinary large number of tanks. . . . The German reserves and officers are running short. . . . There no longer exists any prospect of *forcing the enemy to make peace.*"

Here again, in this phrase I have italicized, is an attempt to place the responsibility for the war on the shoulders of the Allies, and to convince even the Reichstag members, who ought to have known better, that Germany, who had all along desired peace, had been frustrated by the Allies in her efforts to secure a cessation of hostilities.

"No time must be lost!" urged the High Command. "The longer we wait, the harsher will be the peace terms." The generals, who had hitherto conducted the war, were now anxious to throw the onus for saving the country on to the politicians.

The Reichstag leaders had been bamboozled with the victory propaganda which the German Government had issued right up to the last minute.

In his Memoirs published in 1929, Scheidemann offered a belated apology for his attitude in supporting the war, by declaring that he was under the impression that it was primarily one of self-defence by Germany.

He adds: "At the time we all believed that Germany had been attacked—that the French had poisoned German water supplies, and French airmen had dropped bombs on Nuremberg and Furth. These were only newspaper reports, that later turned out to be mere rumours without exception. We were all convinced that all parties concerned throughout Germany had done their best to prevent the war."

Scheidemann goes on: "The German people and its representatives were continuously fooled about conditions at the Front, while the lines in the West were cracking at all points. Anyone who had followed the course of the war with

his eyes open could have had no doubt of our final collapse, unless a miracle happened."

That is the confession of one of the leaders of the great Socialist Party of Germany, which discloses that even the eminent public men, as well as the German people, were ready to accept what was dished up to them as truth.

It can be imagined, therefore, what a sensation the High Command's disclosure made upon the members of the Reichstag.

Most of them, of course, were dismayed. But there was exultation among the Communists. One of them, Haase, rushed out of the building to find his comrade Ledebour. "Now we have got them!" he shouted.

Prince Max of Baden, whom they were pressing to form a coalition Government, hesitated. They expected him to save Germany, to get an honourable peace from the Allies by approaching President Wilson. But he saw it was hopeless to obtain such a peace when the army was beaten, and the people were in revolt.

But—and here is evidence that the peace kite which Germany flew at the beginning of October, 1918, was not sincere—Ludendorff insisted upon Prince Max undertaking the task. These are his words: "*The army needs a rest. The armistice offer must go out at once. I must save my army.*"

"*The army needs a rest!*" Yes; that was Germany's game—a cessation of hostilities until the country had recuperated.

It was fortunate for the Allies that Marshal Foch could see through the ruse.

On October 2nd, Hindenburg arrived hastily at Berlin. He, too, urged Prince Max to try and save the situation. "The military situation is grave," he pleaded. "A new major attack may be expected at once, and I cannot undertake that it will not lead to a catastrophe."

Prince Max was opposed to asking for an armistice. He had more honesty in his little finger than the rest of them

had in the whole of their bodies. He could see what the game was. At the same time, he knew that the Allies would not fall into the trap.

The Kaiser cut short all his arguments at a peace council that evening. "We have not called you in to make matters worse for the High Command," declared the All Highest.

Whereupon Prince Max had no option but to accept the commission to save the country.

Thus on October 3rd went out that communication to President Wilson, requesting him to "take in hand the restoration of peace", and to "bring about the immediate conclusion of an armistice, by land, sea, and air."

But Wilson's reply was a crushing blow to the plotters. It demanded the evacuation of occupied territories, and wanted to know if Prince Max was speaking "merely for the constituted authorities of the Empire who have so far conducted the war."

Prince Max was in a quandary. He could not give the assurance that he was speaking for the people of Germany. There was a delay of two or three days, when at length the gravity of the situation compelled them to accept the principle of evacuation of occupied territories. A note went back to Wilson in reply, in which Prince Max stated that the then German Government was a people's Government.

It seems strange that Ludendorff and others of the High Command should have been so simple as to expect the Allies to give Germany a breathing-space. Apparently, however, that was the belief, thus indicating that the rulers of Germany were either saturated with egotism or were idiots. As is well known, Ludendorff did ultimately lose his reason.

Wilson, who by now was fairly certain that he would be called to interpret his Fourteen Points, tried to secure the disarmament of Germany, and at the same time keep the good opinion of the Allies.

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Prince Max did his best to make it appear that Germany had not capitulated.

But there was one thing which annoyed America while these negotiations were proceeding. That was the torpedoing, on October 12th, of the *S.S. Leinster*, with the loss of many English and Americans. This was further evidence that the Germans were not sincere, and it brought from President Wilson a message which Prince Max later in his Memoirs described as a "terrible document."

Days passed. There came more news of defeats at the front. The Americans had won a great battle, and were preparing to throw large forces against the enemy.

Ludendorff's reports were so incoherent that they could not be understood. Yet, when he discussed the situation with Prince Max and others in Berlin, he spoke of bringing 600,000 men to the Western Front from the Ukraine. He himself would regard the breakdown of peace negotiations "with equanimity."

Allied forces had occupied Menin, Lille, Douai, Ostend, Zbrugge, and Bruges. The Americans were moving forward relentlessly in the Argonne. Turkey was suing for an armistice, and the Austro-Hungarian army was fighting its last battle.

The new German Government was formed from all parties. Posts were given to Erzberger, and two others of the Centre Party (Catholic), to Scheidemann, David, and Bauer of the Social Democrats. Liebnicht refused to cooperate.¹

Notes continued to pass between Germany and President Wilson. Finally the United States President told Germany frankly that since the declaration of the Fourteen Points many things had happened to modify the "Points."

On October 24th Hindenburg issued a manifesto calling upon the army to resist a Wilsonian peace. This was in direct opposition to the policy of the Government which

had ostensibly been created to make a good impression with the Allies. Hindenburg apologized, but Ludendorff resigned. The Kaiser flitted backwards and forwards between Berlin and the Spa headquarters. They could not keep him away from the army.

The German Revolution had already begun. When the Naval Staff, trying to run their business without the knowledge of the new Government, ordered the fleet to put to sea, the men mutinied. It was a suicide order, given in defiance of Prince Max, and the men naturally revolted. Dock labourers and shore garrisons joined the naval men.

Gustav Noske, Social Democrat, was sent by the Government to negotiate with the rebels. He was made Governor of Kiel and succeeded in restoring order. But the revolution broke out elsewhere. Lubeck, Hamburg, Cuxhaven and Bremen hoisted the Red Flag. A mob of workers and soldiers, led by Kurt Eisner, proclaimed a Bavarian republic.

Hurriedly an armistice delegation was appointed. On November 8th the revolutionary flood had reached to within a few miles of the Spa headquarters. Cologne, Dusseldorf, Coblenz and Mainz went over to the rebels, and the bridgeheads of the Rhine fell into the hands of the revolutionaries.

Now began the real clash between Red and Pink. The streets of Berlin and other cities were filled with mobs of half-starved people. There were many soldiers who had dribbled back from the front in small parties or singly. They were in no mood to be trifled with.

The moment seemed propitious. To the balcony of the Imperial Palace climbed Karl Liebknecht where he proceeded to proclaim, amidst deafening cheers, the Socialist Republic. And not a soldier of the pink and white Government fired upon them.

But the Social Democrats were soon in charge. Prince

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Max resigned, the Government fell, and from the steps of the Reichstag on November 9th, Scheidemann proclaimed a Social Democratic republic. In charge of the destiny of Germany now was Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Noske.

Chapter 4

Repudiation

There followed a lull in the course of events. Quiet now were the Spartacists. But only because they were preparing a clash with the Government.

Soldiers and sailors returned home from their stations looking like ragamuffins, their moods threatening.

Food queues lengthened, stocks dwindled. Utmost licence everywhere.

Those who had money spent it, and paid high prices for their pleasures.

They wanted bizarre, gaudy, immoral entertainment, and got it. Enterprising showmen saw to it that the most abandoned were satisfied.

It was not only in Germany that this sort of thing occurred. France, too, gave itself up to weeks of celebration. Even the sedate Woodrow Wilson and other visiting Peace commissioners dropped into the Folies Bergères where the costumes of the chorus were scantier than hitherto, if that were possible.

Yes, the world went mad in those few months between the Armistice and beginning of the Peace Conference.

No country paid heed to what was going on on the eastern side of the Rhine. Germany was left to look after her own affairs. She was beaten into convulsions; she was safe for a while. At least, everyone thought so.

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Workers' and Soldiers' Councils shot up everywhere in Germany. The Government, composed of Independent and Majority Socialists, were not representative of the temper of the people.

¶Ebert, though head of the administration, still sat on the fence politically, running a Republican government, and flirting with the Councils at the same time.

But Karl Liebknecht and "Red" Rosa were more picturesque personages than Ebert, Scheidemann and the others. And when the Spartacists cried out with loud voices against the bourgeois government, they found an echo from the mob.

Ebert saw the rising storm. He formed a Council of the People's Commissaries. It had a Soviet twang which he thought would satisfy the clamour. It consisted of three Majority Socialists and three Independent Socialists. He then proceeded to form an army of volunteers to oppose the threatening revolutionary mobs.

This joint control by Majorities and Independents, however, was bound to fail. Ebert no doubt anticipated this, and even hoped for it. The Independents, more Left than Ebert and his followers, seized the opportunity to resign. Ebert attempted to fill the vacancies with other Majority men, so that the Government was even more bourgeois than before.

To his two henchmen, Scheidemann and Landsberg, he added Noske and Wissel as additional commissaries. The third place remained empty, as he could find no one to act.

The temper of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council became more threatening as time went on. The Councils held a congress and, surprisingly, passed a vote of confidence in Ebert. He had so far hoodwinked them into the belief that he was in favour of a Communist revolution.

But when he addressed them at their next meeting and told them bluntly that he would not tolerate rule by force,

and that any future State must be based on constitutional lines, he was violently attacked. Before the end of that meeting—it lasted several days—Ebert had lost the support of the Councils.

He and his associates left the Congress in a huff, determined not to be browbeaten by the Independents or the Spartacists.

Daily the mobs that forgathered in the streets of Berlin were increased. Banners of flaming red were marched through the thoroughfares. Liebknecht and Rosa spat defiance at Ebert and Scheidemann, and the crowds howled imprecations at discipline.

"Let us end this!" cried Liebknecht. "Let us march!" And when he pronounced the Socialist Revolution, the seething thousands began to look round for a Bastille to burn.

"Red" Rosa, daughter of Rachel, too, comes forward with her contribution. The burden of her cry is "No quarter!" It is thoroughly Marxian, the elimination of Capital by force.

Ebert, Scheidemann and the rest, are only lackeys of the capitalists, she tells the hungry crowd, only too ready to listen. Scheidemann is merely another name for Judas Iscariot. He has sold the workers.

Yes, "Red" Rosa means business, and she intends that these men around her—men who have come from the stench, disease and hunger of the trenches, and who have weapons concealed in their pockets or down the legs of their trousers—shall see to that business.

The imperturbable Ebert waits. Somewhere near at hand, he has a trump card—disciplined soldiers. He waits throughout another day. Yet there is no drastic move on the part of the Spartacists.

Indeed, the Spartacists are a little uncertain of themselves. The Independent Socialists, who they thought would throw in their lot with the proletarian revolution, are hesitant.

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Spartacist nerves are frayed; hearts a little weak.

So the second day passes into the third. Ebert's imperturbability remains, has become confidence. Behind him is General Von Schleicher, adviser to the Reichwehr Ministry.

To his office windows goes Ebert. He glances grimly down upon the demonstrating cattle. His "Free Corps" are ready.

It comes on the night of January 8th. The call has gone out from the Spartacists to mill and workshop. The Red Flag is raised. The mob descends upon the offices of the newspaper *Vorwaerts*; upon the railway stations; upon the large buildings; upon the food shops.

But into the streets, too, go the "Free Corps," sharpshooters for the most part. Machine-guns clatter as their lead pellets find billets in Spartacist flesh.

Inoffensive citizens rush to cover, find their ways home like sinking cats.

A feeble fight. Lenin had done it much better in Petrograd.

It lasted three days, that abortive revolution of the proletariat. It was not really a revolution; it was just a febrile riot.

A systematic search begins to rout out the ringleaders. Particular attention is to be paid to Comrades Liebknecht and Luxembourg.

Where, then, are Karl and Rosa? They have gone west. Somewhere in that part of Berlin they will assuredly be found. Men of the "Free Corps" make no mistake. They find them, dispirited, disillusioned, unable to resist.

"Let me pack my bag," says Rosa. So to the Eden Hotel they lead Rosa and Karl. They are going on a journey; where, no one yet knows.

Up the stairs to her room, then downstairs to a waiting motor-car.

There is a shriek that horrifies the crowd. A brutal guard has raised his rifle and brought the butt down upon the head of the middle-aged Jewess. She collapses, but is still

alive, though the blood is coursing from the wounded scalp.

Is it an act of mercy, or one of brutality? Call it what you will. Another guard steps forward, places his revolver to the head of the stricken woman, and she becomes a martyr to the proletarian revolution.

And, Liebnecht? Yes, he, too. Shots ring out—many of them. The head and breast of Karl Liebnecht are honey-combed with holes. Death is swift.

They carry the bodies away. To the corpse of the Jewess they tie huge stones. It takes many of them to lift that prepared burden, which is then flung into the canal.

Somewhere in the Zoological Gardens they dump the remains of Karl Liebnecht. "No," they say, "we do not know who he is." So there he lies among the unknown dead till the municipality buries him with others.

❧ Communism has received its first defeat.

❧ Where, then, are we in January, 1919? Have we a stable Government in the Reich? Yes, and no. For Communism, being dead or sleeping, lets loose once more Capitalism, Militarism and the old order though without Hohenzollernism.❧

"It is all right now," affirm those who would come back above the heads of the people. And, come back they do—in a little while. "But first," say they, "let us find a man—a man with a loud voice; somebody like Liebnecht who, however, was a little too precipitous. He struck too soon. In time he would have had the German nation goose-stepping at his orders. But the man we want must be a visionary. Only visionaries delight the German people. At the same time, he must be only a figurehead; somebody we can mould to our liking; somebody we can blame if things go wrong.❧ Let him come from the ranks of the proletariat. Let him be a buffoon if necessary. But—and this is essential—he must lead us back to a greater Germany."

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Down in Bavaria was the very man, just beginning to climb the ladder of power. He had climbed ladders many times before, but they were made of wood. Those who wanted such a man knew nothing in those days of Adolf Hitler.

The new Republic had begun its career eventfully. There were to be many more tragic events. It was a so-called Socialist Government, but the old order had not changed. Ebert and his colleagues had no option but to call in the old gang of army leaders, and while Germany would have the world believe that she had purged herself, the white that she exhibited was merely whitewash.

German capitalism had not been touched. True, the Armistice terms would prevent rearmament, but there were ways of getting round that.

It was necessary to have a national assembly. Weimar was decided upon. Elections were held. This was something the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils had not anticipated. They protested to Ebert.

Ebert thought he could do without them. He was moving gradually to the Right. Who wouldn't, with the military and the big industrial magnates behind him? Ebert told the Councils, in effect, to play the game of Communist politics among themselves, but not to try any checkmating.

The Councils took the blow in the solar plexus, wilted and began to pack up. Thus, Mr. Facing-both-ways Ebert was cock of the roost, in name, if not in fact.

Having disposed of the Communists, of the proletariat, of the starving millions who really wanted a change in Germany, Ebert won the elections, his Majority Socialist party carrying 163 seats against 252 of the Opposition. But he had to accept the help of the Centre Party (Catholic). In opposition were the Conservatives, who called themselves the German National Peoples' Party, and the German Peoples' Party, or National Liberals, under Stresemann.

There was also the German Democratic Party which represented the middle-class, but which had little backing.

³¹ Scheidemann became Chancellor of the Coalition. At the first meeting of the National Assembly at Weimar, Ebert's first move was to register a protest against the Armistice terms. A week or two later, on February 10th, a law was passed creating the office of President. Ebert the saddler was elected by 379 votes to 277.

Ebert declared he would be faithful to the new German constitution, and would act as the representative of the whole German people, and not as the representative of one party. But, in case the German workers began to get suspicious that Friedrich Ebert was not giving them a fair deal, he promptly added, "But I declare also that I am a son of the working classes, that I have grown up in the mental environment of Socialism, and that I am not disposed ever to conceal my origin or my convictions."

Still facing both ways, you say? Yes, it was true; Ebert was running with both the hare and the hounds, though mostly with the hounds as exemplified by big business and the military.

Systematic extermination of the followers of Liebknecht was begun by the Government. Put in charge of this work was Gustav Noske, Minister of National Defence, whose "Free Corps" formed of ex-soldiers were ready for any outrage.

"Somebody must be the bloodhound," declared Noske. And he proceeded with his job ruthlessly.

Ostensibly a Majority Socialist, Noske was in touch with the army chiefs. This is proved by his lenient treatment of military reactionaries later.

Noske may have saved Germany from much anarchy, but his methods were no less ruthless than the Gestapo was later.

Thus did opinion suddenly veer round in Germany, for

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the very men who were condemned for their conduct of the war, were now employed by their critics to "save" the country.

* The "Free Corps" had little affection for the Government. They seized the opportunity for carrying out this dirty work, for it was a step towards regaining the power they had lost. This was the first revival of German militarism, and it occurred even before the Allies had got down to the discussion of the terms of peace.

It is not surprising that the Allies looked upon it with dismay, and hardened their hearts. It certainly influenced France in her decision to make Germany as helpless as possible. If Marshal Foch had had his way he would have disposed of the German militarists for a century.

Further trouble soon came from the Spartacists. In Berlin there was another attempt to set up a Soviet Government with orders from Moscow. A general strike was declared throughout Germany which had to be broken with more blood-letting in the capital, and many of the large cities of Germany.

In Bavaria, Kurt Eisner, the journalist, and Independent Socialist had established a revolutionary government. He was opposed to the federal system of the German Reich, and to the formation of a Constituent Assembly.

Eisner had been frank in his charges against Germany for the responsibility of the war. Naturally, he had to contend with the military reactionaries, who sought an opportunity for getting rid of him.

On February 21st, 1919, he was shot by a reactionary officer, Count Arco, while on his way to open the Bavarian Assembly. There followed violent clashes between reactionaries and Socialists in Munich. The latter secured a temporary victory and proclaimed a Soviet Republic which lasted until May.

* It has been said that the Allied blockade was responsible

for much of the Terror that prevailed during the first months of 1919. Doubtless there is some truth in this. At the same time, if the blockade had been raised earlier, the reactionaries would have had it all their own way, and would have soon brought down the Republican Government. It was only because of the privation that the Communists were able to recruit their followers from the workers.

Ebert, and his Chancellor Scheidemann, honestly tried to preserve order in Germany, and although they continued to protest bitterly against the Armistice conditions, they reluctantly tried to carry out most of their obligations.

They blundered in their estimation of the strength of the Socialists in Britain and France. Having achieved power in their own country, they took it for granted that the same thing had occurred elsewhere, and that they could look for a mitigation of the peace terms.

When the terms were published consternation swept Germany, and Philipp Scheidemann, refusing to accept the responsibility for putting his signature to the Treaty, resigned with the declaration, "Let the hand wither that signs this treaty!"

In his place was appointed Gustav Bauer, a new ministry being formed of Majority Socialists and Catholic Centre to affix Germany's seal.

The Treaty was signed on June 28th, 1919, and the National Assembly of Weimar gave its consent on July 9th by 208 votes to 115.²

Despite the revelations already made by Kurt Eisner, the German Government, even when signing the Treaty, refused to accept Germany's war guilt.³

The situation then was analagous to that of today. The Nazis blame Britain for beginning the present war, though they knew Britain had undertaken to go to the help of Poland. Germany indeed had a pact with Poland themselves.

Twenty years ago the Majority Socialist Government of

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Germany believed that the Allies had attacked Germany. The "scrap of paper" concerning Belgium, it seems, was of no consequence. In other words, Prussian militarism and ambition were their own affair, and the concern of no other country.

The Germans were much concerned at the implication that they were responsible for the war. In the correspondence which passed between Chancellor Bauer and Clemenceau just before the Treaty was signed, they declared: "No German can reconcile it with his dignity and honour to accept or carry out Articles 227 to 230 which require Germany to hand over to the Allied and Associated Powers for prosecution, members of the German nation who are accused by those Powers of having violated international law or committed acts contrary to the usages of war. . . .

"The Government of the German Republic is prepared to sign the Peace Treaty, without, however, admitting that the German people were responsible for the war or giving any undertaking in respect of the handing over of the individuals under the terms of Articles 227 to 230 of the Peace Treaty."

No one denies that the German people suffered terrible privation and horrors, during and after the cessation of hostilities. But, unfortunately, they learned nothing from it. The tradition that God was on their side—*Gott mit uns*—still prevailed. If something had gone wrong it was merely a lapse on His part.

The German Government tried to make the best of a bad job, hoping that some of the terms that they regarded harsh might later be mitigated by good behaviour.

At the same time they created a bad impression by refusing to hand over those declared to be war guilty, following ratification of the Treaty on January 16th, 1920.

In Britain, "Hang the Kaiser!" was a popular cry. Of course, before this could be done he would have to stand

trial. By Section VII of the Peace Treaty it was laid down that the Allies would publicly arraign the Kaiser "for a supreme offence against International Morality and Sanctity of Treaties." In other words, he was to be charged with the responsibility for the war.

If that charge had been proceeded with, it would have taken years to prove it, not because he was innocent, but because a multitude of witnesses and documents would have to be examined. William II would naturally have had his counsel to plead his case, and witnesses would have been cross-examined.

At the same time, it was possible under the same section of the Treaty to bring a charge against the Kaiser as being one of those "persons accused of acts of violation of the laws and customs of war."

That would not have been a difficult matter as, by the terms of the Treaty, Germany would be compelled to furnish all documents and information necessary.

As regards the lesser criminals there was a list of submarine and other commanders accused of outrages. Other unofficial lists brought the total of Germans liable to prosecution to something like one thousand.

For days, even weeks, the trial of the Kaiser hit the headlines in Britain. But it was soon clear that even if the Allies had any serious intention of proceeding against the emperor, there were difficulties that could not be overcome. The Kaiser had escaped to Holland, and to ask the Dutch to extradite him might have led to complications with that country.

Next, it was proposed to conduct the trial in the Kaiser's absence, and pronounce "moral judgment" upon him.

Meanwhile the long list of those said to be responsible for outrages was revised and shortened. The Belgians put in a lengthy list, which of course is not surprising.

The German Government argued that it would cause a

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civil war if the Government attempted to carry out the terms of this article of the Peace Treaty. From the Allied side came the argument that the crimes for which the guilty persons were to be arraigned were of such a revolting nature that if details and names were published, no civilized country, even including Germany, would give them shelter.

It was further argued that if these men had been caught during the war, they would have been tried by court-martial and probably shot.

Resolutions were passed in Germany protesting against handing over the so-called guilty persons. And when it is remembered that one of such resolutions was passed by the Democratic Party of Germany, it says little for the sincerity of the Democrats, many of whom had refused to vote war credits.

Holland refused to hand over the Kaiser. Whereupon the German newspapers praised "Little Holland's" pluck. There were demonstrations all over Germany against the attempt to try the Kaiser. The very people who had sent him packing to Holland declared, "He is the greatest, next to Luther, in the world's history." What can one do in face of such inconsistency as this?

The list of war-guilty persons staggered the world when it was published. It included the Crown Prince, Field-Marshal Hindenburg, Generals von Kluck, von Buelow and von Mackensen. Strangely enough, it did not include Ludendorff. On the list was Admiral von Tirpitz, as were a number of officers concerned in the execution of Nurse Cavell, and those who had been in charge of prison camps. One of the "stars" was ex-Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

In the end the Allies did not insist upon the surrender of the war criminals, but reserved their right to do so at any future time.

Finally, about a dozen were tried in Germany itself. Only

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a few were convicted. In 1925 Hindenburg, himself a "war criminal," became President of the Republic without any protest from the Allies.

Thus did Germany break the first clause of the Treaty as soon as it was ratified.

The German Government were on the edge of a volcano. If the Left quietened down, the Right began to rally their forces.

The Right carefully fostered the spectre of Bolshevism, and the Allied nations except France began to show leanings towards the German Conservatives.

The object of the militarists was to woo Britain and America. In this they displayed the same amazing egotism. For they—the very people who had been responsible for the war—had the temerity to hope that they could induce the Allies to mitigate the peace terms.

At this period there were many secret societies in existence, whose members swore to take revenge upon those who had advocated the signing of the Peace Treaty. Anyone who subscribed to the "policy of fulfilment," as they called it, was deemed a traitor. It was a patriotic duty to kill all such people.

This fictitious patriotism promulgated by the old gang, which was designed merely to secure power for themselves and to bring down the Government, led to many outrages and murders.

But a sinister phase of this campaign was the beginning of the persecution of the Jews. The old accusation that Jews used the blood of Christians for ritual purposes gained credence once more, as it had done many times through the ages.

The Hidden Hand of Jewry was behind Germany's distress. It was not difficult to convince the credulous German people of this, for they could see Jews living in luxury while they were in want.

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This luxury, however, was not confined to the Jews. Strangely enough the very people who were raising the Jew bogey were doing very well themselves with the money they had made out of the war. But an affluent Jew seems to excite more comment than an opulent Gentile.

Thus did the Jewish persecution begin in Germany in those early days of 1920.

Behind the Nationalist movement were some of the big magnates and industrialists. They financed reaction then as they have always done since, including Hitler's campaign.

Unfortunately for the Socialists they had to take the responsibility for the so-called harsh peace. In vain they pleaded that there had been no option but to accept the terms. The bullet-headed militarists were blind to reason.

At length direct action took the place of secret plotting. The Nationalists having obtained a "kitty" of a few hundred thousand marks, prepared to swoop upon Ebert and his Government. Looking round for a man to lead an insurrection they chose Wolfgang Kapp, an American-born German of fifty-two years of age. He was a son of a National Liberal of Bismarck's time, and was thus well saturated with pan-Germanism.

If Kapp were lucky with his rebellion, he stood chance of becoming Chancellor. If he were unlucky, then he was to be the scapegoat.

For the real personage behind the Kapp *putsch*, as it was called, was no other than General Ludendorff, who kept discreetly in the background while directing operations.

Kapp had been constantly in touch with the East Prussian Junkers, and was their Reichstag mouthpiece during the war. He was one of the founders of the Fatherland Party, extreme in their nationalism.

In the early part of 1920, the Government became suspicious of Kapp. They learned that he was plotting, with certain officers, a *coup d'état*. They learned a good deal more

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about the plot when General Luttwitz, one of the conspirators, actually went to Ebert and, out of bravado, told him what was afoot. He presented the President an ultimatum which demanded the dissolving of the National Assembly, which was to be re-elected; and the appointment at the Ministry of War of a professional soldier.

Ebert refused these demands. Whereupon Luttwitz threatened to march on Berlin.

Luttwitz had no sooner left when a telephone message went to the police to arrest him, Kapp, and two other conspirators, Bauer and Pabst. The name of General Ludendorff was not included.

Did the Government know that Ludendorff was in the plot? It seems impossible that they should have been so ignorant. It has even been suggested that Ludendorff was at Luttwitz's house when the officers went to arrest the latter, and that they deliberately ignored the supreme conspirator.

✓The police got none of the other men. And on the following day, March 12th, the conspirators struck.✓

Many of the provincial regiments had agreed to co-operate in the *putsch*. Messages were sent to them to hold themselves in readiness. The plotters held a meeting and distributed the civil posts in the new government they were going to set up.

Kapp was appointed Chancellor, and he proceeded at once to draw up a proclamation to the German people.

At the same time the Government flashed messages over the radio, calling upon the people to resist this attack on the Republic.

The conspirators gave their troops orders to march at eleven o'clock at night.

Later that night Ebert and Noske learned that the brigade under the command of Ehrhardt at Doeberitz was marching on Berlin. There was a panic.

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There was only one remedy—flight.

Could Ehrhardt be stopped? About what time would he reach Berlin? Noske was of the opinion that the soldiers would be in the city in less than an hour.

They called Admiral Trotha, Ehrhardt's commanding officer, who was loyal to the Government. What could he do to hold up Ehrhardt?

Trotha promised to go out and meet him, though he was certain that he could not persuade Ehrhardt to halt.

"But delay him all you can," urged Noske.

Trotha went in his car, and met them half-way to Berlin.

"I have come to negotiate with you," said Trotha to Ehrhardt.

The latter halted his men. There was a parley. Trotha continued to argue. Time fled. The Government in their motor-cars must be well on the way to safety by now.

¶ Trotha did a good job. It was not until 6.30 in the morning that the brigade arrived in Berlin. The heads of the Government had gone.¶

The conspirators seized the Government buildings. The rebellion was apparently a success.

And who was it who now suddenly appeared on the scene? Why, Ludendorff—in full uniform.

Foreign journalists invaded headquarters, saw Ludendorff, and promptly put out the news that the Kaiser was expected back in Berlin at any moment.

They were a little premature. Berlin suddenly woke up to the fact that the electric light had failed, that there was no gas, that no railways were running, that all transport of food supplies was stopped.

¶ The Government had produced their trump card—a general strike.¶

The Kapp Government ruled a paralysed Berlin for four days.¶ Such a simple ruse as a general strike, it would appear, did not occur to these thick-headed militarists. They had

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omitted to take the precaution of guarding vital points, such as railway stations and factories.

Mutinies occurred among some of the regiments. The rebellion was soon over. The Government returned to Berlin. When men were sent to arrest Ehrhardt, his soldiers fired. At length they had to grant Ehrhardt immunity if he would return to Doeberitz.

He did.

Chapter 5

Elimination

What a wonderful year was 1921!

Look at it from the point of view of the newspapers.

It provided a brilliant summer.

Britain was back to a pre-war outlook. Even more so. For somebody had knocked Mrs. Grundy down for the count, and the voice of the preacher was heard only in the wilderness.

The glowing sun, scorching the foliage with sizzling heat, provided headlines. And belles bathing on golden sands in scanty silk, and road-houses gorged with roisterers, provided pictures.

True, the linings of the pockets of those who had returned from battle were thinning. But what mattered? Sufficient unto the day. . . . There was a glorious to-morrow to come.

The racecourses, getting into their stride, provided news for legitimate sportsmen, and those who had become sportsmen since the war.

Epsom, Newmarket and other venues were thronged with excitable. Humorist, owned by that popular diamond magnate, Mr. J. B. Joel, flashed past the post, winner of the Blue Riband, with Donoghue up.

The horse died a few weeks later. Even the paths of equine glory lead but to the grave.

Yes, a good year was 1921, seen from the news editor's

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desk. There was trouble in Russia, the Soviets gradually subduing those countries that didn't want Soviets.

Then there was the question of Reparations. The Allies had delivered to Germany the bill. It read: "Please pay £6,600,000,000." Germany replied, "We can't."

It was all good for the papers.

Then there were plebiscites here and there, none of them satisfactory to all parties.

Out in Arkansas there was a huge death-roll through floods. Then Dempsey knocked out Carpentier.

The biggest sensation was the wreck of the airship R.38.

So the summer lingered into autumn, and autumn produced its Indian summer.

We still got pictures from the golden sands, for the belles were still bathing in scanty attire.

It is August that really concerns us at the moment. An August that ripened the corn earlier than usual. It was difficult to find corn in England. No matter—the war was over.

Everyone took holiday who could, and most went abroad. Let us go to the Black Forest for our holiday. Not in reality, of course, but in spirit.

Two men are strolling along the slopes of Kniebis. They talk and talk, for members of the Reichstag have a lot to say in these colourful days.

One of them has a jaunty step, the other is more sedate. The first is of middle height, stoutish.

We have met Matthias Erzberger before—on that solemn occasion when he jauntily tripped into the railway coach in the Forest of Compiègne. That experience was disconcerting. But jauntiness has returned by now, for that was nearly three years ago.

His companion Carl Diez we know little about, except that he was an occasionally malcontent member of the Reichstag like Erzberger.

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They approach the Kniebis, talking animatedly. We assume from the gesticulating manner of Erzberger that he is trying to ram home an argument. A scheme, no doubt, for Erzberger is a great schemer.

They prepare to ascend the rise, stop and argue it out. Something in the forest stirs, and the men look down the barrels of two revolvers. They begin to run. Like a volley from a machine-gun the bullets pour from one of the weapons. Erzberger stumbles, falls, lies still.

Youth has prowled into the Black Forest. An ideal place to take a curtain.

Diez keeps running; is followed by one of the murderers who wings him in the hand. He is soon well on the way to Griesbach.

The echoes of the shots have died in the trees. The youths have disappeared. Only the body of Erzberger, bleeding from a dozen wounds, tells the sordid story of the forest crime.

Later a party comes from Griesbach, and take away the body of Erzberger. Dogs go out, and the police. They scour the forest, but find nothing—only the crimson stain on the slope of Kniebis.

The murderers have disappeared; have escaped into Austria. Their names are known to be Schulz and Tillessen—members of a secret society, whelps of the old pernicious breed of pan-Germanism.

At the same time, do we wear crêpe for Erzberger? We do not. For, although he is a victim of this vicious process of elimination of the advocates of "fulfilment," jaunty Erzberger was not a likeable fellow.

Can nothing be said in his favour, then?

We will do our best to give him a halo. Unfortunately, it must be a halo such as the painter puts round his subject.

Let us first give him a name. We can call him the Goebbels

of the Great War. He can be classed among the opportunists, in the same category as many others who guided the destinies of Republican Germany.

He was Catholic, and a member of the Centre Party. When Germany declared war on Russia and France, he addressed a memorandum to the Kaiser urging a policy of annexations both East and West. The Kaiser needed no such urging, and opportunist Erzberger knew it. But like a newspaper that advocates a policy, which it knows that the Government is going to adopt, and then says to its readers afterwards: "We told you so!" Matthias Erzberger was striking while the iron was hot.

The Kaiser was grateful for this display of patriotism. And in the fertile mind of the War Lord, the name of Matthias Erzberger was pigeon-holed for future consideration.

Erzberger, too, was hand in glove with the great industrial magnates. Big business had the power and used it in those days. The great Thyssen syndicate of the Ruhr saw possibilities in Erzberger, and elected him to the Board.

It was about this time that Erzberger realized that in certain circumstances the pen can become mightier than the sword. To the Wilhelmstrasse then, full of ideas. "Let us tell the world that Germany is strong, that the Allies have not an earthly chance of winning the war," he urged the military and civil chiefs.

But some of his publicity ideas were even more than the Wilhelmstrasse could stomach. "We know the German people will believe almost anything," said they, "but we cannot expect them to believe the stuff you want to put over."

But, in the end, they gave Erzberger unlimited credit. He became the chief propagandist of German doctrines. He put out the lies about which Philipp Scheidemann complained in his Memoirs.

He is said, too, to have been responsible for Germany's spy activities in the United States, which led to the sabotaging

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of much machinery, material and bridges and the subsequent expulsion of Jack-in-the-box Herr von Papen.

He was active on behalf of the Catholics, but it is not at all certain that it was humanitarian motives that prompted him to intercede with the Turk, Enver Pasha, on behalf of persecuted Armenians.

In April, 1917, Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, presented to the Emperor Charles a review of the prospects of the Central Powers in the light of the Russian Revolution. Berlin received a copy of the document. Erzberger got a surreptitious look at it. Once more the opportunist got in the first blow.

He urged the Majority Party in the Reichstag to introduce the so-called Peace Resolution of July, 1917. The Military Party rose as a body, resented Erzberger's interference, and got the Thyssen Syndicate to dispense with his services.

Yet they could not keep Erzberger down. In the Catholic Chancellorship of Hertling, Erzberger was back again. Then came the Brest-Litovsk Conference, in which Germany screwed the utmost out of the Russian revolutionaries. The Shylock of that deal was Matthias Erzberger, who urged the German Government to exact the utmost pound of flesh.

When the tide turned in 1918, he was once more the opportunist. He published a pamphlet on the League of Nations, President Wilson's pet scheme. The League was something that Germany must keep in reserve with defeat staring her in the face.

During the last weeks of the crumbling Imperial regime, Erzberger managed to intrigue himself into the Ministry. His chance came when Prince Max of Baden formed the coalition of National Liberals, Liberals, Centre Party and Socialists. He became Secretary of State without portfolio.

"Get a peace on Wilson's Fourteen Points," they told him. "Save the pass; get us breathing-space."

"I want a rest for the army!" declared Ludendorff.

Erzberger was the man for the job. "Watch me," he said, as he took his jauntiness to the Forest of Compiègne.

But even Matthias Erzberger could not pull the wool over the eyes of Marshal Foch. "I want this, I want that," said Foch. And Foch got it, notwithstanding the jauntiness of Erzberger.

Yet no one could have done better than he.

Erzberger returned to Germany to find the old regime gone. They put him in the Cabinet formed by Scheidemann, and when that Government wanted to reject the Peace Terms, he advised caution. The German people, he said, could not stand another strain. If Scheidemann refused, another Government would sign the Treaty—another Government, say, with Matthias Erzberger as Chancellor.

He was nearly right; not quite. They made him Chancellor—but merely Chancellor of the Exchequer—in the Bauer Government formed to sign the Peace.

Erzberger busied himself. He nationalized the railways and loaded the rich with taxes. Yet it did not make him popular with the working-class.

The magnates began a crafty campaign to undermine his influence. For years there had been a belief that he was a millionaire, the assumption being that he had helped himself out of the national till.

His denials had no effect, and at length he retaliated by bringing an action against Herr Helfferich, a former Minister of Finance, whom he believed, and probably quite rightly, to be responsible for the libels.

That case was dragging through the courts at the time of the Armistice. It had not been settled when peace was signed. It dragged into 1920, and caused sensation and passion. Erzberger, indeed, found himself in the light of a defendant rather than a plaintiff.

In January, 1920, he was shot at by a youth, but escaped with a wounded arm.

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Since the case against Helfferich, he had taken no part in the Reichstag debates. At the same time, he intrigued behind the scenes. They alleged perjury against him in the Helfferich case, and he asked that his parliamentary immunity should be waived so that he might answer the charge in court. The case was not settled at the time of his death.

As was to be expected, his reputation received a blow when he failed to bring back favourable Armistice terms. Though he was a member of the Republican government, the Military and the National parties had marked him down as one to be included in the policy of elimination.

Sinister figures pass in cavalcade through the pages of German history during the teething days of the Republic.

I use the word "teething" because the fangs which the Allies had drawn were being gradually replaced by new ones. One of those sinister figures is Herr Karl Helfferich, leader of the Nationalist opposition, and head of the secret campaign of blood and terror.

If he were not the real instigator of the murder of Erzberger he was privy to it. He was the Arch Priest of Elimination.

Was Helfferich the instigator of the murder of Walther Rathenau? History has no answer, but it can speculate nevertheless. For on the day following the "elimination" of Rathenau, Helfferich was greeted in the Reichstag with cries of "Murderer!"

Few, if any, Republican personalities stand out as clean as Walther Rathenau. He could, and did, pour oil on the troubled waters of European jealousies and squabbles. Even the frigid statesmen of France thawed in the presence of Walther Rathenau. A new Germany might have arisen had he lived. His death sounded the tocsin of reaction.

In those days of 1922, when the question of Reparations seemed likely to split the Allies, thousands of ex-officers and their youthful hero-worshippers met secretly in beer cellars to plot death to those who supported the "policy of fulfilment."

FROM VERSAILLES TO DANZIG

We can imagine how the murder of Rathenau was planned. Sitting at a table quaffing beer are half a dozen beardless youths, and their moustached hero ex-officer. They sing students songs—new ones to fit the occasion, something like this:

The rifles ring out—tak, tak, tak,
On all the swine, both red and black,
And Herr Walther Rathenau
Will find his precious days are few:
Let fly at Walther Rathenau,
The God-damned dirty Jew!

They are members of the secret society headed by Ehrhardt, whom we last heard of in connection with the Kapp *putsch*.

Slowly, carefully the out-of-work officer injects the poison into those youths.

"The Black Hand of Jewry is behind all the Socialist schemes to dominate the world. The Jews have become rich out of the war. They own the armament factories, the big industries. Yet they finance the Communists to spread revolution."

The fallacy of an industrial magnate wanting to spread Communism which means the abolition of capital, does not seem to confuse these youths. It seems perfectly clear to them. And if it isn't, they do not care to show their ignorance.

~~Walther Rathenau~~ has been preaching sedition, pulling down the effigy of Bismarck, while they, these youths, and their leaders, are seeking to place it again on its pedestal.

These young officers who are the tools of the Nationalists have been left high and dry by the ending of the war. No longer do they have a part in the traditional pomp of the Empire, for no pomp is left.

What then has Rathenau done? As Foreign Minister of

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the Republic he had actually signed treaties with Lenin and Red Moscow. Had he not also written books on Socialism?

Thus the resolution is made to assassinate the Jew traitor, who is really a peaceful, quiet individual with one aim—to lift Germany out of the morass into which she has sunk, and earn the approbation of the world.

Whispers reach the Wilhelmstrasse and Chancellor Wirth is anxious.

"Rathenau," says he, "take care of yourself. They are seeking to murder you."

Whereupon Rathenau smiles, incredulously. He wants to know who "they" are.

"I tell you," insists Wirth, "I have had a secret warning. Let me arrange for you to have a guard of detectives."

Rathenau was not convinced.

"Nonsense, Wirth; who would hurt me? Our policy is surely meeting with the approval of the country. Remember what we have achieved. We have made friends with Russia, and England is more disposed towards us."

"Russia; yes," replies Wirth. "It is Russia they do not like. Also our policy of 'fulfilment' is not popular."

"Among the Nationalist hotheads, of course. But in time they will learn that a military Germany—one that insists upon force to settle arguments, arrogant and menacing to her neighbours, can never earn the approval of mankind. If we show a sense of proportion and reason, other nations, too, will do likewise."

Dr. Wirth is impatient. Ideals are all right in theory. But they are now dealing with hard fact. For "elimination" has claimed three-hundred victims—Republicans, Socialists and Democrats, since the Armistice; all of them murdered. Then there are thousands who have been killed in rebellion or riots.

Wirth reminds Rathenau that the bitter Nationalist

Helfferrich has attacked him time and again in the Reichstag. These attacks are generally signals for Erhardt's "squad" to move.

Rathenau does not believe that Helfferrich means ill against him. Perhaps an invitation to dinner, a little talk about these difficult matters, may adjust outstanding differences. Helfferrich has more bark than bite.

Wirth shakes his head, and calls in the Commissioner of Police, Weissmann. Weissmann tells Rathenau the naked truth. "Your life is in danger; there is a plot to assassinate you. We cannot guarantee to protect you if you refuse an armed escort."

² He tells Rathenau that armed Nationalist plotters march to the song: "Let fly at Walther Rathenau; the God-damned dirty Jew!"³

Yet the Foreign Minister remains incredulous, and so refuses a guard.

The plot is hatched. And through the summer months of 1922 the conspirators watch his every movement, trailing him wherever he goes. Rathenau uses a little car to take him about. The conspirators obtain a fast car.

Towards the end of June, Helfferrich, at the Foreign Minister's invitation, goes to dinner. They have a heart-to-heart talk, and although it does not dissipate entirely Helfferrich's opposition, it does tend to make him more amenable, and to wring a promise from him that he will give more consideration to the difficulties with which Rathenau has to contend in the exercise of his important office.

Yet two days later Helfferrich again becomes venomous in the Reichstag, and it is to be assumed that if he is aware of the plot, he takes no steps to stop the murder.

³ The Königsallee is the venue, and the day is June 24th/⁴ Masons engaged on a new building in that thoroughfare see it all.

Afterwards they give evidence thus:

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"About 10.45 two cars were driven down the Königsallee from the direction of Hundeköhle. The one in front was slower than the other. A gentleman sat in the back seat of the former which was open and kept to the centre of the road. The second car was an open six-cylinder tourer. Inside were two men with leather coats, and caps pulled down over their faces.

"The large tourer overtook the smaller car as the latter slowed down at a bend. The back of the tourer was almost level with the radiator of the small car, when one of the men leaned over, and producing a long pistol, resting the butt in his armpit, he shot the gentleman in the first car at short range.

"It was like a machine-gun volley. Then the other man rose and flung a hand-grenade into the smaller car.

"We all hurried to the spot. The big car shot ahead with a roar, and dashed away down the Wallotstrasse. We found the gentleman in the small car lying still. He seemed to be dead. Nine cartridge cases and the fuse of the hand-grenade were found in the road."

✓ Rathenau is removed with terrible wounds.

Proletariat Berlin is roused. Never before has the city seen such a demonstration of silence. From the factories and workshops men issue forth like migrating ants. It is done so quietly as to make it ten times more impressive. The procession, headed by the Red Flag, and the Black, Red and Gold of the Republic, seems unending. It passes solemnly along the main thoroughfares. Reaction sees it and is a little afraid. But there is no apparent vice in this crowd. Fashionable Berlin sees it, too, and shudders. For it is like a subtle serpent that may be roused to action if molested. And so throughout the afternoon the grinders are still, and the benches vacant.

So Walther Rathenau has passed on. He was only a Jew—but what a Jew! Misguided, perhaps, because of his leanings

to the Russian Soviets. But we had men—prominent men—in England in those days who saw the remedy for the world's troubles in the doctrines of Karl Marx.

We *do* wear crêpe for Rathenau, and we raise our hat to him, too. He was a German, but not of the Germans; he was a Jew. For Jews are not Germans, Nationalism tells us.

Erzberger might have become a Hitler; but Rathenau would have saved the world from Hitler. Moreover, if there was ever a justification for the whittling down of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Walther Rathenau was that justification.

Hard cash—a Judas's thirty pieces of silver—betrayed the murderers to the police. The betrayer was a member of the secret society to which they belonged. Kern shot, and Fischer hurled the grenade. This time authority won and the men were executed.

The driver of the fast car? Well, he, too, belonged to the secret society. And when they examined him they found him a babbling idiot—congenital, it seems. So were most of those irresponsible Nationalists of Republican days, in more or less degree.

Helfferich, as we have said, entered the Reichstag next day to the accompaniment of cries of "Murderer" from the Government benches. Helfferich was badly discredited, for friends were careful not to be seen in his company. Birds of a feather. . . .

A tragic note ends the affair Rathenau. It comes from a white-haired Jewess, mother of Rathenau. It is addressed to Frau Techow, mother of the weak-minded driver of the fast car. From one mother to another, it reads:

"In grief unspeakable, I give you my hand; you, of all women the most pitiable. Say to your son that in the name and spirit of him he has murdered, I forgive, even as God may forgive. Had he known my son, the noblest man earth bore, he had rather turned the weapon on himself than on

him. May these words give peace to your soul. Mathilde Rathenau."

Have we eulogized Walther Rathenau too much? Hardly. He was a great German patriot, though a Jew. He was not a patriot of the type of the Nationalists, because, at the same time, he was international.

A few words of biography will help us to appreciate Rathenau.

Born in 1867, he was the son of Emil Rathenau an industrialist. He himself became director of a firm at Bitterfeld, and six years later of an electrical firm that built stations at Manchester, Buenos Aires and many other cities. In 1902 he was the director of about a hundred companies.

During the war he saw the dangers of the Allies' blockade, and began a huge organization for utilizing raw materials at Germany's disposal. He alone was responsible for saving Germany's collapse through lack of materials. In effect, he was the initiator of the self-sufficiency scheme by which Germany expects to carry on the second world war indefinitely.

In 1919 he was chosen to take part in the preliminary conferences at Versailles. He presented a report on the nationalization of the coal mines, and was the Government expert at the Spa Conference in July, 1920. In the spring of 1921 he was at the London Conference, and in May, 1921, he joined the Government under the Chancellorship of Wirth.

He bore the brunt of the Reparations controversy, and advocated a policy of mutual understanding which might have led in the end to a satisfactory solution of the Reparations problem. He wanted peace for Germany, but he was honest enough to want it for the whole world as well.

In a speech at Stuttgart, a fortnight before his death, he declared, "When in the space of one hundred years the history of this epoch will be written, then the question will

be carefully investigated: Where were the first threads of peace tied? How was it possible in a world poisoned by hatred, and on a planet flaming with the passion of mutual revenge, in a world of destruction and dissension to knit the first threads? That answer will be: The German nation has united these threads by its patience, its energy, its positive will, its idealism, by its sense of sacrifice."

The sentiment is good. You cannot blame him for being a bad prophet.

It was in this spirit that he co-operated in the final conclusion of peace with the United States in August, 1921. As Minister for Reconstruction he concluded an agreement with France at Wiesbaden, securing France privileges in deliveries of materials in payment of Reparations owed to France by Germany. By this act he overcame the tension which seemed likely to plunge France and Germany into war again.

But there were some things he could not approve. The annexation of Silesia by Poland was one of them, and he resigned from the Cabinet on this question. Perhaps this was a sign of weakness, for Germany wanted him more than ever at that time.

He went to London in November and December, 1921, to try and interest England in a German loan. The loan was refused. But he came into touch with many prominent English politicians and business men, all of whom were able to pay respect to a German for the first time for many years. It led to the Locarno Pact.

Pressed by Wirth he rejoined the Cabinet, and became Foreign Minister. He negotiated the Treaty of Peace and friendship with Russia in April, 1922, which cancelled all outstanding demands between the two countries.

At Genoa in May, 1922, he ended a remarkable speech with a dramatic demand for peace.

Rathenau was doubtful as to Germany's war guilt. He

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was not the only one, by a good many, who was blind on that subject. Indeed Germany covered up her tracks so cleverly, that there are people to-day who really believe that the Allied Nations were equally guilty.

"The way of truth is long," said Rathenau. "It is all the longer as the lack of European interest has caused the questions, which to us are vital questions, to be looked upon as solved, and the verdict of history as pronounced. The verdict can only be pronounced by a universally acknowledged tribunal. Our search for the truth will not be satisfied until, in the name of history, a verdict has been passed by an authorized tribunal."

There we leave Rathenau. With his murder Reason took a further step in the wrong direction.

Chapter 6

Reparations

A FEW words about Reparations.

We have said that the Allies produced the bill amounting to £6,600,000,000, and that Germany said she couldn't pay.

Nearly every country in the world had its finger in the Reparations pie in some way or other. The Allies were at first determined to make Germany pay, though they had not ascertained whether she could or not.

Germany, on the other hand, was determined not to pay, or to pay only as much as she was forced.

To make it look as if she were really hard up, she "cooked" the books.

✕ True, Germany's financial position was in a curious state. She had been weakened by the war and the blockade. And certain productive territories had been taken away from her. Her currency had dropped until it was possible to buy a handful of "tausend" marks with a copper.✕

But, although some districts of Germany were badly hit, others were prosperous; far more prosperous in fact than British industries. There were about two million unemployed and four millions on short time in Germany in those areas where it was impossible to get raw materials for industry.

✕! At the same time in those places where raw materials were plentiful, Germany had flourishing industries. In

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Westphalia, for example, extensive reorganization and expansion was in progress.\v

Here a great part of the wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few combines. Head of one of these concerns was Hugo Stinnes who was so wealthy he hardly knew what to do with his money.

The industrialists of this district deliberately hoarded their wealth. They refused to lend it to the poorer districts, and concentrated on making their own areas prosperous. They craftily transferred their money abroad to escape Reparations. They amassed huge fortunes for themselves, and there was fabulous wealth in a few hands.

Yet the Government was bankrupt. So that when the Allies decided upon their bill for the damage Germany had done during the war, they were surprised to get the answer that Germany couldn't pay.

You may ask why it was that the German Government was bankrupt while there was so much wealth in the country. The answer is that they did not tax the industrialists enough.

The question then was: How could the Allies get at the wealth of Westphalia? There was no other way but by military occupation.

\v|The German Government sent their representative Dr. Simons to London to repudiate the debts. The Allies retaliated by occupying Duisberg, Rhurhort and Dusseldorf on March 8th, 1921, calling it "sanctions," and drew a customs cordon between the occupied and the unoccupied territory.\v

\v|This led later to the occupation of the Ruhr, and Germany knew that this move was preliminary to the occupation of that famous industrial area. The German Cabinet promptly resigned.\v

This frequent resignation of German Governments confused the issue, and they intended it should. The Allies then

threatened to occupy the Ruhr, and, if necessary, apply even more drastic sanctions.

Of course, Reparations was a lever which the Nationalists used to recruit their adherents. The so-called "policy of fulfilment" was gradually becoming discredited.

The next move on the part of Germany was to establish a Government under Karl Wirth, composed of Centre, Majority Socialists and the Democrats. Its policy was to pay at least one instalment of Reparations, which it did to the extent of one milliard of gold marks.

Meanwhile murders went on. The Independent Socialist Gartis was murdered in Munich, and the well-known Maximilian Harden was wounded in Berlin. Gustav Stresemann, head of the German People's Party, opposed to the Government, was nearly poisoned.

It will be seen that no political party in Germany was free from guilt. Monarchist demonstrations took place frequently, though the Hohenzollerns were by no means popular.

*; The mark depreciated. A plebiscite in Upper Silesia gave a huge majority for Germany. The Poles promptly organized an armed revolt against a German defence force. Though French troops were stationed in the territory they could not restore order. Upper Silesia was eventually turned over to the League of Nations which awarded the industrial districts to Poland.

This caused another crisis, and many rich German land-owners who had promised support to stabilize the financial situation, refused now to do so.

There came another resignation of the Government, and more confusion. Wirth, however, returned to the Chancellorship, despite extreme opposition from the Right which was now getting powerful.

*; The mark dropped lower and lower, and the reactionaries were busier than ever.

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The Reichbank refused to hand over gold reserves in payment of Reparations, and the Socialists would not allow the workers to work extra time in industry.

\ At length in December, 1922, and January, 1923, the Reparations Commission declared Germany to be in default. French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr. The Ruhr population resisted passively.

The mark now began a further drop that was ludicrous. At first 150,000 to the dollar, in two months it was a million to the dollar. Before the end of 1923 it stood at four billions to the dollar.

/\ In August, 1923, a coalition government was formed by Gustav Stresemann as Chancellor and Foreign Minister. An attempt to stabilize the currency broke down. Finally, martial law was proclaimed throughout Germany.

The political situation was now appalling.

The French, more indignant at the way the Allies had been out-manœuvred than were Britain and America, tried a hand at political intrigue. They endeavoured to get a separatist movement started in the Rhineland and Bavaria.

In Bavaria that movement had already started. A Bavarian People's Party with von Kahr at its head had established a government with the object of making Bavaria the head of the German federation. He was, however, a self-confessed monarchist.

Bavarian politics were too much for the French. They were so complicated they were better left alone.

To return to Reparations, and how Germany eventually got out of them.

*\ The question is: Could Germany have paid what the Allies demanded?

The answer is: Yes, but she took good care to "cook" the books to make it appear that she could not.*

In the first place, she could have bled the industrial

magnates who were rolling in wealth, instead of relying upon current expenses from the poor middle class who were crushed under the burden of taxation.

Numerous committees—The Dawes Committee was one—and meetings here, there and everywhere, were held to decide whether Germany could pay. The truth was that, so far as the German Government exchequer was concerned, she could not.

General Charles G. Dawes, Chairman of the First Committee on Reparations, declared in one of his reports that Germany, if let off Reparations, would obtain an unfair advantage in the world's industrial competition.

And this is what the financial experts reported: "Germany's growing and industrious population, her great technical skill, the wealth of her material resources, the development of her agriculture on progressive lines, her eminence in industrial science, all these factors enable us to be hopeful with regard to her future production.

"Since 1919, the country has been improving its plant and equipment. The experts specially appointed to examine the railways have shown in their report that expense has not been spared in improving the German railway system. Telephone and telegraph communications have been assured with the help of the most modern appliances. Harbours and canals have likewise been developed, and the industrialists have been enabled further to increase an entirely modern plant which is now adapted in many industries to produce a greater output than before the war.

"Germany is therefore well equipped with resources. She possesses the means for exploiting them on a large scale. When the present shortage has been overcome she will be able to resume a favoured position in the activity of a world where normal conditions of exchange are gradually being restored."

An optimistic document. But they had forgotten Germany's

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cleverness. Germany had the capacity to pay, but she was determined not to do so.

It is unthinkable that Germany could have paid the total debt at once or even in a few years. But she could have done it in time.

Let us consider only one part of her industry, the Ruhr. The situation there was disclosed in a report by the Franco-Belgian Mission in the Ruhr, known as M.I.C.U.M., during the French occupation of that district.

It was found that there were great inexhaustible mines, gigantic factories, unsurpassed miners' villages, and colossal constructions of all kinds.

† Now for figures. In 1912 the production of coal in the Ruhr amounted to nearly 103,000,000 tons. In 1915, during the war, it dropped to 86,500,000 tons.

In 1924 the production reached 112,000,000 tons at a time when the Reparations problem was acute, and Germany was continuing to reiterate that she could not pay.†

But it was not in the Ruhr alone that this progress was shown.

In other parts of Germany, notably Lower Silesia, Upper Silesia, Halle, Bavaria and Saxony, there was increased output, and it was estimated in July, 1924, that the yearly production of coal in Germany was 125,370,000 tons despite a strike that had occurred in the mines two months previously.

At the same time there was a competition between coal and lignite for the fuel market of Germany which stimulated industrialists to improve their plant and increase their output, thus cutting the cost of production. Moreover, the production of lignite in July, 1924, was 75 per cent above that of 1913.

¶ Yet Germany was claiming at this time that she was bankrupt. Actually she was exporting 31,000,000 tons of coal, a figure that was increasing every day.‡

It was estimated that German industry was working

117 per cent of its 1913 activity, while at the same time French industry could only claim 63 per cent of the 1913 output.¹ As to British industry it was gradually dropping in face of German competition.² The mark having been so greatly depreciated Germany, in fact, had a favoured-nation position in the world's markets.

There was a grave danger indeed, that Germany would drive British coal from the Atlantic and Mediterranean seaboard.

But all Germany's industries had developed on similar lines, particularly steel.

During the war, Germany had increased enormously her electric plants for the manufacture of munitions. Owing to her exceptionally favourable position brought about by the sudden depreciation of the mark, the companies which had borrowed large sums in debentures for the expansion of plant, were soon able to redeem them. As a consequence the capacity of the central electric power stations which was about 2,000,000 kilowatts in 1913, rose to 3,300,000 kilowatts in 1924.

German foundries, too, had developed on similar lines to the mines. They had new plant, plenty of cheap coke, and a large number of workers who had by now been induced to work the extra hours demanded by their masters. They were thus able to establish prices that defied competition.

German metal products were beginning to find their way into all markets of the world, even ousting British products from the Dominions.

Coincident with their plan to restore their military position, the Germans were making a bid for industrial domination, supported by the Reich Government, which still insisted upon the canard that the country was bankrupt.

The Committee of Exports and Reparations reported: "The German people should be placed under a burden of taxation at least as heavy as that borne by the peoples of the

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Allied countries." They added: "No single person in Germany, whether speaking as an individual or representing any section of the nation, has failed to accept that principle when it has been squarely put to him."

But there was a discrepancy between what can be regarded as theoretical agreement and its actual acceptance.

The Allied consumer was taxed far more than the German consumer as a result of the war. What is more, the Germans were able to sell in the world markets at the expense of Britain and France, the countries to whom Reparations were due.

In 1871 when the French nation was called upon to pay £200,000,000 indemnity to the Germans, they paid promptly. Germany in the last war deliberately evaded her responsibilities and made it difficult for the Allies to collect. We are to-day still suffering heavy burdens, and have had ourself to pay for a war that Germany began.

It is said that no country can to-day make anything out of war. That is true. But it is equally certain that a beaten country can escape retribution. Germany with no public debt was in the position to restore her finances, and having huge stores of wealth, was able to despoil the Allies for her own profit.

Despite the shabby way in which the Allies had been treated, it is certain that even as late as 1932, before the advent to power of Hitler, Britain and America and even France would have accepted the olive branch. If Germany had come forward in an honest manner and offered a truce for ten years, a holiday to forget the war debts, and agreed to work amicably in Europe with other nations it would not have been then too late to save the present war.

Instead Germany remained arrogant, and ploughed a furrow of her own.

¶ The London Conference of 1921 had arranged for Germany to pay £100,000,000 a year, plus 25 per cent of the

German exports. By 1932, when Dr. Bruening the Chancellor declared that Germany could pay no more, a sum of £625,000,000 had been handed over, that is, about a tenth of the total amount originally decided upon by the Allies, and a little more than half of what they expected to be paid in the 1921 arrangement.¹⁴

Meanwhile the Nationalists were increasing in strength in all parts of Germany. But it was Bavaria that seemed to offer the greatest possibilities for propaganda and action.

In this country there was an extraordinary confusion of politics, even more pronounced than in other parts of Germany.

In 1921 a militia called Einwohnerwehr had been started. Von Kahr, the Bavarian Premier, was urged to dissolve it, but argued that he dared not do so because of the Communists. All the elements of reaction began to concentrate in Bavaria. The prime mover in the establishment of the Einwohnerwehr was von Escherich. He had also formed a second force called the Orgesch, which, although connected with the other body, received no official recognition.

Recruits rallied to the Orgesch throughout Germany, and it soon began to reach the proportions of an army, though a secret one.

The Bavarian Government declared itself too weak to suppress it, but an Allied ultimatum scared von Kahr into taking action against the Einwohnerwehr.

By this time Ludendorff had found his way to Bavaria, supported by numerous refugees from the Kapp *putsch*. He had joined Adolf Hitler who had formed a party called National Socialism, though they were not socialists at all.

Ernst Toller, in his book *I was a German*, refers to the early beginnings of this movement thus:

"In Munich a man called Adolf Hitler was sentenced to several months' imprisonment for attempting to break up a meeting of the Bavarian Monarchist Party. With a mixed

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following brandishing sticks and chairs he rushed at the platform and the meeting degenerated into a regular shambles, in which several people were seriously hurt.

"This man, Adolf Hitler, managed to collect round him a band of discontented clerks, ex-officers, anti-Semitic students, and dismissed officials. His programme was naïve, not to say primitive. The Jews and the Marxists were the enemies within the camp responsible for all Germany's misfortunes. They had stabbed her treacherously in the back while she was still unconquered, and then convinced the masses that Germany had lost the war.

"The enemy without was France, a degenerate country, with whom war was unavoidable, and therefore necessary. The Nordic German race was superior to all others, and God had called him to weed out from it Jews and Marxists. Hitler goaded his people into a fanatic nationalism. I do not remember hearing Hitler's name when, two years before 'we enemies within the gates' were fighting hard against the injustices of Versailles. During the Revolution, too, he was silent."

Toller goes on to explain that he had been told by a political prisoner that the latter "had met this Austrian house-painter in a Munich barracks during the first months of the Republic. At that time Hitler was calling himself a Social-Democrat. My informant had been very unfavourably impressed by the 'conceited and puffed up' way in which he had spoken about his politics, like a man who has read many books and digested none. But he had not taken him seriously because an N.C.O. in the Army Medical Corps told him that when Hitler returned from the front, badly shell-shocked, he was quite blind at first in hospital, but had suddenly recovered his sight.

"That nervous blinding made me thoughtful. A man who can deliberately go blind in face of things he does not want to see, must possess extraordinary strength of mind.

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"Hitler was subsidized by a group of wealthy manufacturers, who used him as their cat's-paw, while in public he inveighed against the trade unions."

But Toller did not know then what we have since learned. And that is that Hitler's policy was adjusted to the wind that was beginning to prevail. He had tried Social Democracy, it seems, but had discovered that Nationalism was the stronger infant, that the majority of the German people still pined for the military pomp and circumstance that had been denied them since the Armistice.

There has never been any question as to the two original main points in his programme, namely, the denial of Germany's war guilt, and the liquidation of the Treaty of Versailles. Later he tacked on the policy of a Greater Germany, which meant not only the inclusion of all Germans in the Reich, but the inclusion of those who were not German.

Hitler was merely a loud-voiced, irresponsible braggart. But he was good material for the Nationalists and the industrial magnates who wanted to save their industries from the Communists.

The part which Ludendorff played in bringing him to the fore has never been really appreciated or understood. The general was the craftiest of Germany's officers. He was an intriguer of devilish cunning. He was as big a fanatic as Hitler, but he kept well in the background, and disguised his real activities.

Hitler would never have succeeded with his apparently fantastic programme, had it not been for the unusual conditions prevailing in Germany.

He was not the only fanatic with a crowd of adherents. In Dresden there was a strange person named Zeigner, who ruled at the head of a coalition of Communists and Left-Wing Socialists. Under him a Red Army had been formed, waiting for a reactionary outbreak in Bavaria, when it hoped

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to get the sympathy of the workers of Berlin, and so establish a Soviet Government. Indeed, there were as many unattached Communist parties in Germany as there were Nationalists.

The group of wealthy manufacturers who, at various times, found money for Hitler, included Thyssen, the Ruhr magnate, Krupp, Otto Wolff, and others.¹ Probably the presiding genius of the Nazi programme was Thyssen, who appears to have entered the Nazi orbit somewhat later than the others, although it is not at all certain that he did not subscribe to the party funds at an early stage.

Some of the industrialists have been "liquidated" by the Nazis themselves. Thyssen was forced to escape from Germany at the end of 1939.

Attempts were made at times to discredit Wolff by charging him with corruption, and calling him a Jew.

Those who goose-stepped with Hitler during his soap-box days have fallen like leaves in a gale. Or, to use another metaphor, the monster that the Frankensteins created has gobbled them up.

In the very early days of Hitler's campaign, it was probably Krupp and Wolff who were his chief patrons, Thyssen coming in later when it seemed fairly certain that Hitler was the man to co-ordinate all the Nationalist parties.

Krupp is well known as the husband of Bertha Krupp, who gave the name to the huge cannon that bombarded Paris in the Great War. Formerly Dr. Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach, he added the name Krupp when he married Bertha. Bertha inherited the Krupp millions at a time when the family fortunes, as represented by the Krupp works, was soaring in 1902.

Otto Wolff began business dealing in iron.

Otto Wolff's rise is not only a romance of big business. It is also a striking commentary of Germany's plea during the Reparations controversy that the Reich was bankrupt. Wolff

was one of those industrial magnates who, while the people went short during the days of the Republic, piled up enormous wealth, and invested it abroad.

It is true that the Wolff concern did occasionally throw a crumb to the Republican Government. It contributed towards the support of the "Free Corps," raised by the Government, to combat Communism. But like Krupp and Thyssen, Wolff preferred to subsidize reaction, for reaction meant armaments, and armaments meant a demand for iron.

Otto Wolff was a partner in many post-war undertakings of Krupp. The German Workers' Union in which Hitler worked as a secret agent in 1919, and which became the Nationalist Socialist movement, was the Bavarian counterpart of the Fatherland Party which Krupp subsidized at the end of the war.

It was disclosed during the trial of the assassin, Lindner, in December, 1919, that money in banknotes which the Munich reactionaries were using, bore the stamp of the firm of Krupps.

These industrialists did not make their money in a time of prosperity in Germany. It was made during the war, and the time of impoverishment that followed the war—at the time, in fact, when the German Republican Government was telling the world that it could not pay Reparations because there was no money in the Reich's till.

It is estimated that before the Great War the German people had deposits in the savings banks amounting to one thousand million pounds. In 1923 this huge sum had disappeared into the hands of the magnates.

Wolff was in partnership with Ottmar Strauss. When war broke out Strauss was called up. He failed to pass his medical examination. A genial man, he ingratiated himself with the officials in Berlin. Orders for iron soon began to come in, and customers did not mind how much they paid for this commodity as long as they got it.

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At the end of the war, Otto and Ottmar quickly saw that their bread was buttered on the Republican side. Ottmar made friends with the new rulers of Germany. The Republican Government was inexperienced. It was nice to have a clever man like Ottmar to give advice, and even better to know someone with a pile of money like Otto and Ottmar.

The Government used Wolff money to finance the "Free Corps," and to set up the Prussian State Commissariat for Public Order. Could the Republican Government bite the hand that fed it? Could it refuse to grant export licences or any other facility that the Wolff concern required?

Otto and Ottmar had gradually lifted their concern out of the old iron business. They became producers of iron with fingers in armament pies, and partners in Krupp's.

Otto Wolff provides an object-lesson in how to acquire stock and shares.

After the war the Phoenix Company continued to show each year a reduction in the number of ordinary investors. Between 1917 and 1920 public capital in the undertaking dropped more than 50 per cent. Hit by the war the small shareholders had unloaded. Where, then, did the shares go?

In 1920 Otto Wolff let the cat out of the bag. He attended the annual meeting of that year, and triumphantly reported that he represented a group which owned 45,000,000 marks' worth of the shares, or, in sterling value, £2,250,000, representing two thirds of the capital.

It was in this way that the magnates got hold of the money of the masses who were glad to sell out their holdings at any price they could get.

The Republican Government had not the courage to tax these rich industrialists. Thus the country's exchequer went bankrupt.

You may not have heard much of Herr Fritz Thyssen. He was once the uncrowned king of German industry.

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For failing to deliver the coal demanded by France during the Ruhr occupation he was fined 500,000 francs.

The foundation of the Thyssen Ruhr industries is another romance of big business. The Thyssens began in 1867 with a modest plant for the manufacture of hoop iron. The Franco-Prussian war broke out, and the output of the coal in the Ruhr jumped from four to fourteen tons. The Thyssen company shared in the general prosperity, and in 1871 the Thyssens bought a farm at Styrum, near Mulheim, as a site for the manufacture of iron products. The factory was small, but there was plenty of room for expansion.

In thirty years Thyssen & Co. grew into a powerful firm. Big cities rose near the factories, and the ramifications of the concern were enormous. At Caen they had a harbour. Their interests extended through the Saar and the Moselle—into cement, potash, lignite and other trusts. They were interested in the electrical power in Rhenish Westphalia, and shipbuilding and shipping in Bremen. And, of course, the firm prospered during the Great War.

There were two reasons why these industrial magnates supported the Nationalists. Firstly, they were afraid of losing their wealth through Communism. Secondly, they had a scheme for European-wide trade domination. But this industrial domination was not to be achieved by straight methods of competition. They schemed military domination first; industrial supremacy would come as a natural sequel.

We shall deal with this scheme of European hegemony later.

Chapter 7

Munich

Adolf Hitler is no Bismarck. He is not a Napoleon. He embodies none of the strength of the ancient dictators. He is a joke beside Caesar and Ghengis Khan. Charlemagne might have given him a job as batman, but that is all.

Hitler believes he has the ability of all the world's dictators. But only Adolf Hitler believes it. No one else—not even Goering, Goebbels, Hess and the rest of the Nazi racketeers—has a high opinion of him. He is the “goat” if things go wrong.

Thus we do not deal with the early life of Hitler as we would, say, of Napoleon, for Adolf's childhood is not an object-lesson on “How I began.”

We know that he was a house-painter, probably a paper-hanger, occasionally a builder's labourer. He is said to have been gassed in the war and to have become blind for a time, but we are not even sure of that. He has the Iron Cross First Class. How he got it is a mystery that we shall deal with later. There is no record of the award in regimental documents.

After the war, the coming dictator of Germany found himself in a military camp at Munich. A Communist Government was in power. In a way it was not a bad Government, though everyone but a Communist had harsh things to say about it. In actual fact, however, the Communists were the

only united party. The Nationalists were split up into factions, under leaders as fanatic as Hitler, but without his craft and energy.

Ludendorff had a good look round before he decided upon the party which seemed likely to meet with the approval of his backers the industrialists, and one calculated to win over the German people.

At that time Hitler was engaged as a spy and informer for the Military Intelligence. It is said that many Communists were shot on the strength of his reports.

He tells us in *Mein Kampf* how schemes for the unification of Germany flashed through his mind at this time.

The frequent attendance at political meetings to report on the activities of the participants, made Hitler ambitious to sway audiences. He was convinced that he had a better line of argument than the speakers he heard. Already he was by no means a tongue-tied man. He could speak for hours without saying anything to the point. But that does not matter if you keep on talking. Once a speaker hesitates, an audience begins to think, then to heckle and finally to shout down the speaker. The art of public speaking is to say nothing, but to keep on saying it.

Thus it was with Hitler, whose imagination, as it is to-day, is equal to any prevarication.

It is related that Hitler opened his mouth a little too wide on one occasion, and would have been arrested by officials of the Bavarian Government, had he not pointed a rifle at them.

He had long detested the Jews, and he saw in the slogan "Down with the Jews!" a rallying-cry for all the parties opposed to the Communists. This cry suited both the industrial magnates—those who were not Jews, for they hated Jewish competition and industry—and the military party. At all events, this new slogan resulted in Hitler's promotion, to a job as speaker for the Reichwehr.

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One day he went to a meeting of the German Workers' Party. When a speaker advocated a union between Bavaria and Austria, he shouted the man down. Though an Austrian himself, such a policy was unthinkable. There was only one policy that was worth advocating and that was a union of all Germans.

The policy of the German Workers' Party was elastic—elastic enough, it seems, for Hitler to become a member. Hitler tells us that this was the turning-point of his life.

Soon, Anton Drexler, the locksmith who had formed the party, was superseded by the man with the louder voice. The name of the organization was changed to National-Socialist German Workers' Party, with a comprehensive policy of nationalism.

Hitler was now head of a motley collection of malcontents. Yet it was a beginning. Attendance at the party's meetings rose, until the old propaganda stunt of a congress was arranged.

By this time Adolf was getting out of hand. Drexler, the former leader, resigned, and left the Austrian hod-carrier to carry on alone.

The mass meeting took place and two thousand people packed a Munich beer-hall. Hitler was badly heckled by Communists, but this was exactly what he wanted.

He began to develop an oratorical style which, because of its eccentricity, made an impression on the gullible Bavarians.

Meanwhile Ludendorff looked on approvingly, keeping characteristically in the background.

¶ At this time Hitler's programme included two themes, the denial of Germany's war guilt, and the repudiation of the Peace of Versailles. Hitler was one of the first to go to the length of complete repudiation of the Treaty.¶

¶ It was not difficult to convince the discontented workers and out-of-works that the Allies had forced a shameful peace

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on a helpless Germany, brought to its knees by traitorous Jews and Communists. He soon became one of the most popular leaders in Munich.¹⁴

If a speaker continues to reiterate his points, they will stick in the end. The Bavarians, like the Prussians, had been humiliated by the defeat of the armies. Hitler's trump card was to play up this complex for all it was worth.

I recall, some years ago, a man who used to stand in Hyde Park, London, and utter libels against the Salvation Army. He succeeded in convincing a lot of people that this movement was full of corruption. He acquired a following who advocated a "cleaning crusade." That most estimable institution—the Salvation Army—took no notice, and the "crusade" died down when it was accidentally discovered that the "crusader" was a gaol bird who was trying to begin a rival institution for down-and-outs and, incidentally, to line his own pockets.

Hitler created a patriotic enthusiasm approaching frenzy. It was a clever ruse to blame the Jews for Germany's ills. The Jews, as a race, had never been popular in Germany, though they had contributed to art, science, literature and industry. They were allowed only to take positions which the average German regarded as beneath his dignity. That many hundreds of Jews made good in these despised occupations was all the more galling to the so-called Aryans.

¹⁵ Hitler's party soon began to hold regular meetings. He chose a colour for the party's emblem. It was red.¹⁶ This enraged the Communists who often tore it to rags. Yet it was excellent publicity for the National Socialist Party.¹⁷ In 1920 Hitler added the Swastika.¹⁸

He took care to keep abreast of political sensations. When the Allies became irritated with Germany for non-payment of Reparations, he roused his hearers in the Circus Krone—there was a crowd of 5,000—to a high pitch of hatred against the Allies.

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Soon it became necessary to employ young desperadoes to handle the Communist hecklers. Free fights often occurred. The National Socialist bodyguard increased in numbers and even became embarrassing.

¶ At length Hitler decided to form the Sturmabteilung, abbreviated to S.A. Some of Hitler's followers, less cautious than he, wanted the S.A. placed on a military basis. But under the Versailles Treaty, Germany was not allowed an army of more than 100,000 to police the country, and Hitler foresaw trouble with the Allies if the S.A. resembled a military organization.

¶ Hitler gave the problem a good deal of thought. Hundreds of young men were joining, attracted for no other reason than that they were penniless. In the S.A. they could get food, for funds were being provided by the industrialists.

Hitler cleverly disguised what was really an army. He had the men trained in athletics, ju-jitsu, boxing and sports. Foreign observers did not see the danger until it was too late. ¶

It is doubtful if the National Socialists did at that time carry out underground propaganda like other Nationalist societies. Hitler was courageous enough to keep its activities above ground. It retaliated against its foes unblushingly. The men were at length given brown shirts, which served as a uniform for identification purposes.

Up to now Hitler was still a corporal in the army. He spread his gospel among the Reichwehr to which he belonged, and it was from the regiments that he secured some of his earliest collaborators.

General von Epp, and Ernst Roehme, who was on his staff, were two of the earliest recruits. Von Epp supplied the party with money that enabled them to buy a newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, for propaganda. This publication became the official organ of the party.

†{Two airmen, Rudolf Hess and Hermann Goering, joined the movement. Others were Josef Goebbels, Himmler, Streicher, Gregor Strasser and his brother.†

Hess was destined to become Hitler's deputy, Goering his second in command, Himmler the chief of the Gestapo (Secret Police), and Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister. Streicher and the Strassers were doomed to be "liquidated."

There was little doubt that Hitler's intention was to turn the S.A. into a military force as soon as he conveniently could, and this occurred in 1923 at the time of the French occupation of the Ruhr. He awaited an opportunity to use it against the Communists. The decision was made to attack the Communists during their Labour Day demonstrations on May 1st, but at the last minute their weapons were seized by the Munich Government. The big *putsch* came at length on November 8th. Hitler had called together a number of nationalist organizations to protest against the Ruhr occupation. Why the occupation of the Ruhr should be regarded as a *casus belli* can be guessed. The French had got under their thumb the Ruhr magnates who were refusing to deliver the coal as payments in kind for Reparations.

Hitler had to do something, for it was from those same magnates he had been getting his funds. His campaign had been hanging fire, and no doubt the industrialists had become impatient.

The various Nationalist organizations were banded together in what was called the "German Fighting League," and Hitler hoped to intimidate the Berlin Central Government into resisting the French by first of all seizing the Bavarian Provincial Government if the latter did not come into the scheme.

President of this Government was Gustav von Kahr, a Monarchist. Chief of the Bavarian Army was von Lossow, while chief of the Munich police was von Seisser. On the

night of the 8th, von Kahr and von Lossow were to speak at a political meeting in the large beer-hall known as the Burger-Brau.

Everything went according to plan—up to a point.

That is to say, about 3,000 people are in the hall, and von Kahr is in the middle of a speech, when it happens. Suddenly there is a bang. The door flies open, and an excitable little man, wearing a black frock coat, black patent leather shoes, and grey striped trousers appears at the back. An iron cross dangles from his breast.

It is Hitler. A dozen S.A. men are with him.

The little man is terribly annoyed at something. A revolver appears in his hand. Like one who is starting an athletic event he points the weapon upward and pulls the trigger. The bullet buries itself in the ceiling. That by way of introduction.

Now he begins to shout and wave his arms, and then point dramatically at von Kahr on the platform. Von Kahr has deserted his manuscript, and is gazing with amazement at the intruders.

Adolf Hitler begins: "The National Revolution has begun. This hall is surrounded by six hundred armed men. No one must dare to leave. I will put a machine-gun in the gallery if anyone resists. The Reichwehr and police are on our side. Their barracks have been occupied. There is no longer any National Government in Bavaria. In their place a provisional government will be formed."

All bluff; and lies. Nevertheless it cows von Lossow and von Kahr.

When Hitler tells them he wants to discuss the matter with them in another room, they follow him meekly. At this early stage in his career, Hitler had already begun the "Come to Berchtesgaden" stunt.

Up to now the spectators have remained silent. With the disappearance of their leaders, pandemonium breaks loose.

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Among the National Socialists is Hermann Goering. He steps up to the platform, and begins to talk.

"Keep quiet!" he shouts. He tells the audience that a new government is being formed in the other room. And like a nursemaid talking to unruly children he lets them have it. "Now go on drinking your beer quietly," he advises.

Storm troopers wait; carbines ready.

"I will be head of the government," Hitler is telling von Kahr and von Lossow. "You, von Kahr, shall be regent of Bavaria."

Two others are nominated as head of the army and the police.

Then, standing dramatically in front of the two amazed Bavarian officials, Hitler points to his revolver. "I have four bullets here—three for traitors, and one for myself if things should go wrong." This is the first occasion known on which Hitler threatens to kill himself. In the course of years he has made many similar threats.

Who is this who is now coming into the beer-hall? Why, none other than General Ludendorff, who has a habit of turning up, according to circumstances.

The General evidently thinks the circumstances do warrant it on this occasion.

So the General and Hitler meet, just as the latter is coming out of the inner room flushed with success.

"Ah, General," says Hitler, "just in time. You are appointed to command the army."

Ludendorff is not at all sure that the moment is propitious to accept such an honour. He has glanced round the room and noted the hostile faces of the audience. Moreover, von Kahr and von Lossow are evidently not now so frightened, for here they are following Hitler out, reminding him that he once swore that he would never try any tricks in Munich.

Hitler replied, and this he has replied many times since

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when he has been caught breaking his word: "Truc, I have broken my word of honour for the Fatherland!"

Hitler now mounts the platform and tells the audience that the Bavarian Government has fallen; that the Berlin Republican Government has been deposed, and that a National Government will be formed in Munich to rule all Germany.

He announces the new appointments: "The new Bavarian Government shall consist of a Regent—Herr von Kahr—and a Prime Minister—Herr Poehner. The direction of the Government will be under myself until we have disposed of the traitors in Berlin. His Excellency, General Ludendorff, becomes chief of the army, and Colonel von Seisser will be Reich Police Chief."

Thus it is all settled. How easy it has been!

He talks to the audience about the sinful Babylon of Berlin, and tells them that this coup has been undertaken not from motives of egotism, egoism, or any other ism, but merely for the love of the Fatherland. To-morrow, he adds, there will either be a National Government in Germany or they—the Nazis—will all be dead.

Matters have not gone quite the way that His Excellency, General Ludendorff, had anticipated. As in the abortive Kapp *putsch* he has remained in the background, allowing someone else to do the dirty work, with the object of seizing the plum—the military dictatorship of Germany.

He has to be content with being the head of the army under this man, Hitler. Yet all is not lost. There is plenty of time to dispose of this ranting demagogue.

So with apparently good grace he advises von Kahr to submit. He holds out his hand which is gripped by von Lossow. Von Kahr, however, is silent. He is a Monarchist, and this is not a Monarchist rising.

Hitler notices his hesitation, and breaks in with a startling proposition.

"Leave it to me," he says, in effect. He tells von Kahr that he will go at once to His Majesty, and acquaint him of this revolution that is designed to repair the injustice done to his father.

"His Majesty" is Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, for whom von Kahr has made himself Regent, if not in fact, in imagination.

Von Kahr brightens up at once. This is the line of talk that he wants. He accepts the assurance of the Nazi Ananias.

Or, does he?

They shake hands upon it, and there is a scene of enthusiasm. The nincompoops in the hall cheer. It is apparently all the same to them—von Kahr or Hitler.

Hitler is on the platform again, putting over the real stuff.

"I lay blinded in hospital five years ago," he tells them. "I then made a resolve that I would not rest until the November Revolution was but a memory. I will build a new Germany out of the debris."

A pause. "Amen!" says Hitler.

"Heil!" shout the audience.

Von Kahr speaks. Ludendorff speaks. Von Lossow speaks. And even Seisser, new Police Chief.

Munich soon hears, and crowds round the beer-hall, anticipating fireworks.

There is some disturbance outside among the S.A. men. Hitler goes out to settle it. He returns to find von Kahr and the rest of them no longer there.

What has happened?

He calls von Kahr's telephone number. The voice that answers is that of Ehrhardt, commander of the brigade that supported Kapp in the *putsch*. There is a chuckle and mockery in the voice. Ehrhardt hates Hitler, and Hitler returns the compliment. Ehrhardt is now commander of the "Free Corps" in Bavaria.

He tells Hitler that von Kahr is quite safe.

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Nazi spies go out to ascertain what has happened, and are promptly arrested. Something has misfired.

Already soldiers are plastering the walls with posters warning the people against the Nazi traitors, and decreeing the suppression of the S.A.

Hitler is not unduly worried, however. His storm troops are as numerous as, and probably better equipped than, the Reichwehr. A clash is to be welcomed rather than avoided.

Yet once an enemy is entrenched, it takes a numerically stronger force to dislodge him. Von Kahr's troops in fact have occupied strategic points in the city. Roehme, head of the S.A., has occupied the district headquarters of the Reichwehr.

All the same, headquarters, or no headquarters, the Reichwehr are ready. It is now up to Hitler.

The Nazi leader and Ludendorff put their heads together. After all this preparation something must be done—a march through the streets, anything.

They decide to march. The inhabitants of Munich will rally to them. Von Kahr will not dare to shoot.

So they form in ranks. Hitler wears a buff trench coat, a smutty moustache. Ludendorff is beneath an old shako. There, too, is Goering, not so stout as now; all the same, ready for anything.

They march; pass through the first cordon of police unmolested. Ludendorff is happy; he is in charge. They will not shoot at the old warhorse.

They march on.

Nothing might have happened but for the bald-headed Streicher, the very Streicher who began the intensive persecution against the Jews ten years later.

Streicher is impetuous. He seizes a policeman's rifle. There is a tussle.

Foolish Streicher! He has put back the Nazi revolution ten years.

The mischief is done. The policeman's rifle explodes.

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It is the spark that lights the fire. A volley rings out. The man next to Hitler falls. They were actually walking arm-in-arm. Hitler drops to the ground, lies as if dead. Ludendorff, majestic, unafraid, scorning the rabble, marches on.

Goering has fallen wounded. From a nearby house darts a dapper figure. He picks up Goering and staggers with him to shelter. Does Goering to-day ever give thought to that friendly Jewish doctor who saved his life in those far-off days?

Another question: Where is that Jewish doctor now?

A Nazi physician has followed the procession. He picks up Hitler, puts him in a car, and drives away. Bullets whizz round the vehicle as they dash out of range.

That is the end of Hitler's first bid for power. The would-be dictator is very depressed as he hides from the searching police. Who wouldn't be?—with men dying all around.

Police go to Hitler's house, and draw a blank. Three days later they find him, and march him to prison.

Five years is the sentence. But he is out in nine months after an excellent time in prison, writing chapters of *Mein Kampf*, eating his fill, reading, listening to gramophone records and meditating.

Ludendorff pulled strings. The charge against him was dismissed.

The Voelkische movement sustained a serious setback.

While this trouble was occurring in Bavaria, there was a separatist movement in the Rhineland. On October 31st, a Rhineland Republic was proclaimed at Aachen, Coblenz and other towns. But this died quickly. In Bavaria, too, there was little semblance of a separatist movement by the spring of 1924.

*| The Berlin Government, however, was still weak. There was a succession of Chancellors, governments falling mainly on the financial situation and Reparations. \X

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Nationalist parties continued their policy of "elimination" of those who supported the fulfilment of the Versailles Treaty. But the "fulfillers" grew fewer and fewer, and hardly any voice was raised in favour of paying Reparations.

The Government itself was moving more to the Right, and the Nationalists growing more powerful in the Reichstag.

But this was not enough for the industrial magnates. Ostensibly the Government was still democratic. It did not offer security or advocate the expansion of Germany. The solution was a strong Nationalist totalitarian government.

How was this to be achieved? Some of the magistrates who had supported the defeated Nazi party were in despair. There seemed little likelihood of an early overthrow of the Republican Government. One at least, Fritz Thyssen, bided his time.

Meanwhile the magnates were reaping the advantage of the collapse of the mark, and buying all the shares in the big companies that they got from the people. They bought them at ridiculous prices.

¶ In the years that followed the abortive Munich *putsch*, Hitler, who had been released from gaol, and his party were quiet. Hitler was on ticket of leave.¶ He was barred from public speaking. In gaol he had come to the conclusion that he could reach supreme power only by legal propaganda.

The Nazi party was far from dead, though weakened. During Hitler's absence it had been kept alive by Goering, Strasser, Roehme and the rest. Ludendorff had severed his connection with the movement. Disillusioned because he had no chance of a military dictatorship, he turned to eccentric cults, advocated paganism and the worship of the old German gods. He secured a small following; but that was all.

Hitler was dismayed on his release to find that the membership of the party numbered only a few thousands. Some

of his followers were in favour of another attempt to secure power by force. Hitler was against it. They called him "Adolf Legalité" in derision.

Yet, he was right. He began systematically to co-ordinate all the other Nationalist parties, and made them members of his own organization. That he was successful in this is shown by the increased membership year by year.

In 1925, when the Nazi party was revived, it had less than 30,000 members. In seven years it grew to one and a half millions.

Hitler began a new youth movement, and his storm troops recruited thousands of jobless youngsters. One by one he secured the support of the Nationalists in the Reichstag. Peaceful penetration was proving more successful than *putsches*.

One powerful Nationalist—indeed the leader of the Nationalists in the Reichstag—with whom Hitler managed to secure an alliance was Dr. Alfred Hugenberg, a manufacturer of armaments during the Great War. He was the bogey-man of the Republic.

This was his political creed: "I believe in government by a powerful phalanx of strong men who have the will and the power to enforce rational conclusions based on the needs of the people." In other words, government by the elect, but not an elected government.

Hugenberg's ambition was to become head of a new Reich. By joining hands with the Nazis, he hoped that it would help him to the dictatorship. He controlled a good many money-bags including his own. He also controlled a number of newspapers which were useful to Hitler for propaganda. Hitler stole a lot of Hugenberg's ideas.

Here were two men, pretending to be friendly to each other, but waiting the moment to double-cross.

In one of his speeches Hitler admitted that the Nazis, now had a hand in the funds that were reserved for the

German nationalists. "We intend to carry on our propaganda at the expense of others."

The Nationalists looked upon Hugenberg as a man of destiny. But youth regarded him as too old for a Bismarck. He was head of the "Steel Helmets" and Hitler's Brown Shirts that contravened the Peace Treaty. The "Steel Helmets" and Hitler's Brown Shirts were amalgamated. From that moment Hugenberg lost his grip.

In 1932 he and Hitler quarrelled, and Hugenberg lost his "Steel Helmets." Hitler's next move was to boycott Hugenberg's newspapers.

It had been said of Hugenberg that he was a stone wall, not flesh and blood, but he had to submit to the loss of his four million men.

It was he who brought down Chancellor Bruening's government, and assisted in the overthrow of Chancellor Schleicher. The first Hitler Government was constructed according to his plan. At length, however, the Nazi party swallowed up Hugenberg's followers and he was compelled to retire into private life. He was not even allowed by the Nazis to dictate the policies of his newspapers or his film company.

In 1935 he was destined to have a nervous breakdown. It is said that the hoisting of the Nazi Swastika in place of the German Eagle caused him to be sent to a mental home for treatment. At the end of 1939 he was compelled to flee from Germany.

Chapter 8

Dictator

The Berlin Government passed through many political phases during the financial reconstruction period, though it managed to keep a balance between Left and Right.

✓/In January, 1924, a British Labour Ministry assumed office. There were political upheavals in France. The sequel to these changes was a more friendly attitude towards Germany. But, if the Allies had wanted to offer the olive branch to the Republican Government they should have done it before.

The League of Nations was established, but Germany was not asked to join. Indeed she showed little anxiety to do so. I hold no brief for the League of Nations, but I am convinced that Germany would have had a deal more to her liking, if she had intimated earlier that she was willing to take part. It is even possible that America would have come in. Germany was not without friends among the various nations who made up the League, and it is possible that many of the irritating inflictions of Versailles would have been removed.

On March 4th, 1925, Gustav Stresemann, German Foreign Minister, sent the memorandum to the Allies which laid the foundations of the Treaty of Locarno. When the pact was signed before the end of the year, it resulted in the freedom of the Ruhr and the Rhineland which had been

under Allied occupation under the terms of the Peace Treaty.

The Locarno Pact, however, was not received with unanimity in Germany. The Nationalists regarded it only as a compromise, for it included the permanent retention by France of Alsace-Lorraine, and that was something to which the Nationalists could not agree, though the Pact did ensure the safety of Germany's western frontier. It was not security that the Nationalists wanted. Their plan was a Greater Germany. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine was retrogression, not progress.⁴

Meanwhile President Ebert had died early in the year, and Marshal von Hindenburg had been elected in his place. The election of Hindenburg was a triumph for the military, for although the old campaigner was aged, he was the symbol of the old aggressive Reich. Not a word was raised against this by the Allies, although Hindenburg was one of those they had listed for war guilt.

Germany was gradually assuming her real complexion, that of a great military Power, though her teeth were yet in the milk stage.

In 1926 it was already too late to stop Germany's lapse into militarism. The interregnum was coming to an end. The days of the Republic were already numbered. The Allies had imposed a Peace upon Germany. They were allowing her to escape the undertakings she had made. When Germany first tried to avoid payment of Reparations, the Allies should have acted in quick time. The only solution was a military occupation of the whole of Germany. The German people, unlike those of France and Belgium, had escaped much of the horrors of war. It is true that there was starvation in the country, but beyond the Rhine they had seen little of war's other horrors—blasted cities, killed and mutilated women and children and old people. The sufferings of the German people were nothing compared with that

of the people of Belgium. Not even a bomb dropped on Berlin.

Not having had an ocular demonstration of the mighty power of the Allies, the German people still believed that the collapse of their armies was not due to a military defeat, but to some extraneous cause such as the Jews.

At the time of the election of Hindenburg to the Presidency the fortunes of the Nazi party were at a low ebb. It is doubtful if it would have ever risen out of its own ashes if it had not been for Fritz Thyssen, the great Ruhr magnate.

The great industrialists were loosening their purse strings readily enough for the Nationalist cause. Hitler was determined to get some of that money, for he was as much Nationalist—and more—than the so-called Nationalist parties.

It was a lucky break for him when he came into contact with Thyssen.

Thyssen's brain held a gigantic scheme for Germany and, incidentally, for himself. By 1927 the Nazi party had grown to 72,000 members. As Hitler was after the Chancellorship, and even more, this was a paltry following. Somehow or other he had to get hold of the people.

✶Sometime after the year 1927 Thyssen conceived his plan. He became a member of the Nazi party, and threw all his energies and money into the campaign. In 1928 the membership of the National Socialist Party increased to more than 100,000, and in 1929 it nearly doubled itself.

The Nazis were able to send out speakers and agitators. Brown Houses were begun in all the large cities. Newspapers were started everywhere. Men were trained to occupy important posts as soon as Hitler achieved his aim of capturing the Government.

When Germany proposed to sign the Young Reparations plan, Hitler forced the issue and obtained the backing of the other Nationalist parties.

About this time the party received an adjunct in the shape of Dr. Josef Goebbels, a strange-looking individual, but brainy. He had written a good deal, but not successfully. However, his anti-Semitic views appealed to Hitler. An indication of Goebbels' fanaticism on the question of the Jews is shown by a statement in later years: "A Jew is for me an object of physical disgust. I vomit when I see one. Christ cannot possibly have been a Jew. I don't have to prove that scientifically. It is a fact. I rate an ordinary prostitute above a married Jewess."

Goebbels was a Doctor of Philosophy of Heidelberg University. One does not expect a Doctor of Philosophy to be foul-mouthed. But Goebbels was a dwarfed cripple which may give him a stunted outlook on life.

A few details about the plan of Fritz Thyssen.

It was a scheme to get the whole of the German heavy industry into his own hands. His first object was to eliminate the rival groups of industrialists, many of whom were Jews and Catholics, then to crush the Socialist workers, disband the trade unions, and so force his employees to work longer hours to make his products cheaper in the world's markets. Later he intended to reduce wages and make himself still further a monopolist.

He was also aiming at another period of inflation. Having plenty of capital in other countries, he would not be hit by this inflation. On the contrary, he would pay the debts of his industries.

The industrialists had done well out of the inflation a few years before when the mark had dropped so low that finally it had to be repudiated. How they had added to their riches can be illustrated by the fact that many farmers were able to pay off mortgages on their farms by selling half a dozen sheep. A further example of this inflation can be given in the story of an American citizen who, while staying at a nunnery in Austria, was much concerned at the distress

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caused to the mother superior by a mortgage on the institution, for which she could not find the interest. The American promptly offered to pay off the mortgage. It cost only twenty-five dollars.

This story is probably apocryphal, but it serves as an illustration.

But that was not all of Thyssen's scheme. He visualized a greater Germany in which he would be able to sell his manufactures, the return of the Colonies, and even the acquisition of more.

It has been said time after time that Hitler could not exist without Thyssen. The steel magnate was indeed the last of his backers to be dropped overboard. At the end of 1939, it was said Thyssen had to bribe himself out of Germany to the tune of a million marks. I prophesy that Thyssen will come back in a way that Hitler will not like.

To return to the Thyssen scheme, which was really only the beginning of a much more ambitious plan. The real plan was finally adumbrated by Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, the arch priest of Nazi doctrine.

Briefly, it provides, after the liquidation of all the "iniquities" of Versailles, the introduction of other iniquities. Of course the Nazis did not call them iniquities at all, although they were directed against Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, the Russian Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugo-slavia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine.

Yes, the scheme of Dr. Alfred Rosenberg provided for the subjugation of all those countries. In other words the intention was, and still is—though some of the scheme has already gone astray—the establishment of a so-called Germanic union to include all those States.

Curiously enough Poland was not originally included in the plan. No doubt the Nazis hoped to get the help of Poland in their grandiose scheme of racial empire.

Dictator

This so-called "racial empire" which the Nazis visualized is one of the most fatuous ideologies ever conceived. It was merely a cloak for aggression. Many of the countries listed for subjugation have no Germanic connection. The Nazis tried to make it comprehensive by introducing the word Nordic. When challenged the scheme is shown to be similar to the Communist conception of a unified Socialist state. In other words, there is no difference in practice between National Socialism and Communism except the retention of the capitalists. But most of the capitalists have gone, and Hermann Goering, as head of the heavy industry, does almost what he likes. Krupp's have still survived, but one wonders how long it will be before this huge organization is compelled to hand over its concern lock, stock, and barrel.

Nazi Socialism drew closer to Communism, and Communism drew closer to National Socialism. They were at length separated only by a hair's-breadth.

¶ The plan of Dr. Alfred Rosenberg visualized a huge European Nazi Empire. The so-called Germanic nations were to come into the federation whether they wanted to or not. Wherever there were Germans in any European country, whether they were in a minority or not, that country was to be regarded as having been colonized, and to be brought into the federation.

It is useless for the Nazis to deny in later days—and the denial was often made—that they had no aggressive designs against any country. "I have no further territorial designs in Europe," Hitler told Neville Chamberlain at Munich, with his tongue in his cheek. Compare this statement with that of Goebbels on one occasion, when he told a crowd of Nazis that the future of National Socialism did not lie within the country of its origin, but in the whole of Europe.

This, then, was the plan which Thyssen and Hitler and his racketeers had in mind when they began an intensive campaign to secure the control of Germany.

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It was never the intention of the Nazis to make this plan public. They expected to take a piece of territory here, and a piece there, until they had achieved their aims. But many Nazi leaders incautiously let the cat out of the bag, and the so-called Rosenberg plan was no longer secret in European chancelleries.

When, therefore, the question is asked: "Why did we go to war for Poland?" the answer comes back: "Because of the Rosenberg plan."

And, to be sure, the Nazis were doing quite well towards the achievement of the plan before they decided to attack Poland.

In 1930, the Nazi Party had grown to about 400,000. This membership in a country of 60,000,000 was almost negligible, although they had succeeded in getting twelve seats in the Reichstag.

¶But the 1930 elections caused a sensation. Eighty per cent of the electorate voted, and although the Communist poll was increased by one and a half million, Hitler's party secured an increase of five millions. Almost the whole of this increase came from voters who had previously been apathetic and indisposed to go to the poll.¶

It brought Hitler 107 seats in the Reichstag. Hugenberg's National Party lost nearly two and a half million votes. It was an indication of the way the cat was jumping. The Socialist strength dropped half a million, but were still the strongest party with the Nazis a good second.

Meanwhile the internal situation in Germany did not improve. Unemployment rose to six millions. Banks collapsed, and Dr. Bruening, Chancellor, was compelled to declare a moratorium.

Nothing could be better from the point of view of the Nazis. It was ideal for the spreading of Nazi doctrines, that is, those doctrines which they used as propaganda. The real scheme, as I have said, was secret.

At the same time, Hitler and his gang of crooks were out for personal ambition.

In 1929 Hitler had been invited to the Ruhr, where a party of two or three hundred industrialists had run the rule over him. Thyssen had introduced him, boosted him, represented him as the saviour of Germany and, incidentally, of their own industries.

Hitler's visit was not eminently successful. Some of the magnates were inclined to wait events. But when the budding Fuehrer went back in 1932 and delivered an harangue to more than 2,000 of them, his stock had risen considerably. True, the magnates had only a vague idea of what National Socialism was. The two words seemed to them a contradiction in terms as, indeed, they are.

Hitler, however, came through that trial triumphantly, despite the fact that some of the industrialists—Otto Wolff among them—were reluctant to put their hands into their pockets. The persuasive Thyssen overcame their scruples, and it was decided by a majority that every coal and steel concern in the Ruhr should contribute to the Nazi funds. To raise the money without interfering with their capital, they voted an increase in the price of coal. Thyssen himself provided three million marks.

¶[Between the years 1930 and 1933, therefore, it was Ruhr money that put Hitler on his feet.]¶

The Chancellorship changed hands frequently. Dr. Bruening, one of the best Chancellors Germany ever had, was intrigued out of office by Franz von Papen.

Bruening is regarded as one of the most enlightened of Germany's post-war statesmen. His fall was a mystery, but it was freely stated in June, 1932, when it occurred that some of the measures which Bruening contemplated were tainted with Bolshevism.

It was said that Bruening was explaining to Hindenburg some of his schemes for smallholdings, when the President

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broke in: "I am told that the Bolshevik plan for smallholdings is contained in the new decrees. What is it?"

Dr. Bruening went on reading his report, until at length Hindenburg cried irritably. "Now, my dear Chancellor, we cannot in any circumstances go on further like this. Bolshevik smallholdings we cannot have. The two trade unionists must get out of the Government."

Bruening gazed at Hindenburg with astonishment. He had seen the implication that he was dismissed. He refused the offer of the Foreign Minister's post, and then added: "I will now speak to you as officer to officer. . . . It is obvious that you have already been instructed from another source." Next day he handed Hindenburg the Government's request to resign.

This incident discloses the intrigue that went on behind the scenes. Bruening was right; someone else was advising the crotchety old warhorse. In a moment, we shall see who it was.

Franz von Papen was a cavalry officer during the war, but his chief activities in the early stages were in the United States, where he organized a spy and sabotage system.

He was eventually forced to leave America through his own carelessness in leaving an attaché case in a public vehicle. When found, the contents exposed the whole sordid scheme. On his way back to Germany his kit was rifled by British police at Falmouth. They found counterfoils of cheques recording payments to notorious saboteurs who had blown up bridges and damaged factories.

Von Papen has always been a blunderer. But like a jack-in-the-box he has turned up here and there, doing dirty work for Hitler, trying to intimidate little nations into the Nazi orbit.

Von Papen was the Judas of the piece that brought Hitler to the Chancellorship.

¶ When elections were held after the fall of Bruening, von

Papen became Chancellor. He did not last long. A counter intrigue brought General von Schleicher to power. Schleicher had no political experience, but that did not matter. He was a symbol of the old militarism that was gradually regaining power in Germany. Indeed, Germany had long since repudiated the military fetters of Versailles, and was arming more or less openly.

The elections that brought von Papen to power resulted in a big set-back for the Nazi party, to the dismay of the Ruhr magnates, who were lending at the rate of nearly 100,000,000 marks a year.

Thyssen once more slipped into the breach, for when von Papen was replaced by Schleicher, a grand opportunity occurred to get von Papen on the side of the Nazis.

It has been suggested that Thyssen opened the money bags still wider. At all events he won over von Papen, and the triumvirate of reaction—Hitler, Hugenberg and von Papen—was complete.

A secret meeting between Hitler and von Papen took place at Cologne in the house of Baron von Schroder, the banker. The two men settled their differences, and agreed to act together.

As the result of various conferences Hitler agreed to accept the Chancellorship, if he could get an invitation from Hindenburg. The newspapers heard of these meetings, and the plot to bring down Schleicher was exposed.

That, however, did not deter the conspirators. They had all their plans settled. The alliance between all the reactionary groups was complete. They succeeded in dragging into their plot Major Oskar von Hindenburg, the son of the President.

Old Hindenburg took little interest in politics. He was merely the nominal head of the country, and knew little of what was really going on, for he was surrounded by intriguers who moulded him to their liking.

His son Oskar and Schleicher were all-powerful. The old man, now 83, was in his dotage, and was as dumb on most things as an image of Buddha. At the same time, he was not quite an imbecile on the question of caste. He had no liking for Hitler.

He had once before, but very reluctantly, asked Hitler to take the Chancellorship when there was a difficulty in filling the post. The Nazi leader had refused it, because there was little hope of his being able to retain it in face of opposition from the various Nationalist parties.

Hindenburg frequently referred to Hitler as "that Austrian Corporal." He was particularly annoyed with the "Corporal" when the latter had had the audacity to stand against him in the Presidential elections at the end of the Marshal's seven-year term. Though Hindenburg was the idol of Germany, Hitler had polled eleven million votes against Hindenburg's eighteen millions. This was not a sufficient majority and the election had to be held again. On the second occasion Hindenburg secured his majority, though the Nazi vote was increased.

During the dramatic periods in the history of the Nazi party, Hitler had often threatened to commit suicide. He once told Goebbels—and Goebbels is the authority for it—"If the party splits, I will end it all inside three minutes."

"Three minutes" was the usual period of grace Hitler allowed himself before taking the dramatic step of putting the pistol to his temple.

Writing in his diary of the plot to secure the Chancellorship for Hitler, in which von Papen, Hugenberg and Thyssen were engaged, Goebbels says: "If this succeeds we are in reach of our goal."

§ { The scheme was to secure the Chancellorship for Hitler and make von Papen Vice-Chancellor. It was agreed that, in the event of success, Goering should go to the Air

Ministry, though according to the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was supposed to have no Air Force.¹⁴

Schleicher got to hear of the meeting between Hitler and von Papen at Schröder's house, before the newspapers put it on record. He had no illusions; he was doomed.

❖ The real truth of what happened has never come out. But it is certain that the aged President was too worried to think coherently. He signed a document dismissing Schleicher. Schleicher threatened to call the trade unions out on strike, and to bring soldiers from Potsdam to Berlin. Apparently he was forestalled in his intentions. He was dismissed, and Hitler's party being the next largest in the Reichstag, he was asked to become Chancellor.

Thus Adolf Hitler, who had been a German citizen less than a year, took the seat of the mighty Bismarck. †

Hitler soon got busy. He began a systematic persecution of the lower middle class of Germany. The lower middle class, as every politician knows, is the backbone of the voting power of a country. Politicians do not admit it, but they know it is so. The lower middle class thinks. They are the voters who win or lose elections. Hitler's object was to cow them into submission. The Brown Terror got to work.

Goering organized a secret police. Said the brutal Air Minister: "There must be no scruple about making use of arms. . . . Police Officers who, in the execution of their duties, make use of firearms will be protected by me irrespective of the consequences; but if any man through mistaken caution, fails to use firearms, he may expect to be punished."

The Prussian police were completely Nazified. The most degraded of military officers were chosen to command. Homosexuals and murderers were welcome. The secret police were chosen carefully from the S.A., S.S., and other National organizations. The Civil Service was drained of anti-Nazis. Newspapers were suppressed.

Yet all was not well. The country was not 100 per cent Nazi—far from it. Actually the largest unified party were the Communists. Moreover, it seemed that Adolf Hitler, despite his promises, and he had promised a great deal, did nothing towards the amelioration of the condition of the masses.

Hitler had declared that he would give land to every agricultural labourer, and write off peasants' debts with an additional gratuity of 20,000 marks in cash. He declared that he would abolish the big stores and divide their business among the small shopkeepers.

Ananias Goebbels cleaned his fountain pen, and got to work with his marvellous imagination. He told the people that a new era had dawned, the unemployment would be abolished with a stroke of the pen.

Nothing of the kind happened. Indeed, Hitler was at his wits' end. He had secured power, and had not the slightest idea how to use it for the benefit of the country. His only concern was to suppress those who did not agree with National-Socialism. As to measures for the improvement of the conditions of the people of Germany, Hitler did not know how to begin. Fritz Thyssen must have felt that he had backed a loser.

Hitler's chief stomach-ache were the Communists. Something would have to be done to discredit them in the eyes of the credulous German people. Moreover, some diversion would have to be created to keep the people from thinking too much of the promises that Hitler had made.

On March 5th, 1933, elections were due to take place. What would the electorate do? They had already made up their minds. The Nazis had not produced the goods. As things stood at the moment it was certain that the Nazis would lose a considerable number of seats in the Reichstag. It would be a straight fight between Nazis and Communists, for the Nazi party had gobbled up all the parties except the honest-to-goodness Socialists, and the Centre Party.

DICTATOR

What followed caused a world sensation. The ubiquitous Goebbels, who sometimes oversteps caution and speaks the truth, has a significant entry in his diary published in 1934. He says, "In a conversation with the Leader we settled the main lines of the fight against the Red Terror. For the time being we shall avoid direct counter measures. The Bolshevik attempt at revolution must first of all flame up. At the right moment we shall then hit out."

What did Goebbels mean by this?

There is either an implication that the Nazis intended to stir up the Communists into insurrection by using underhand methods, or that they were to be victims of a plot. The latter seems more likely, for Goebbels makes reference to a "trap" later in his diary. That a drastic scheme was contemplated there is no doubt.

Goebbels was often indiscreet. He has been indiscreet many times since. But as a propagandist he was second to none in the days when the Nazi party was striving for power. The success of the National-Socialist campaign is undoubtedly due to him.

He made the Nazi party by his propaganda among that section of the German citizenry which had no real politics. That is, the lower middle class.

At the same time, the Nazi party was in a quandary in those early days of 1933. Hitler had achieved only one part of his aim. He had become Chancellor. He wanted to become dictator.

The elections were about a fortnight ahead. Something would have to be done to whip up voters. A raid on the headquarters of the Communist Party was said to have produced considerable seditious evidence against them in the shape of documents. But it appears this evidence was not spectacular enough to discredit the Communists.

The Nazis decided upon something more sensational.

Chapter 9

Fire!

A lurid glow above Berlin on the night of February 27th caused a mad rush from the cafés and restaurants.

The cry was raised: "The Reichstag is on fire!"

It was true. Berlin's Parliament buildings were blazing furiously.

The huge crowd of people who gathered to watch the futile efforts of the firemen, saw in the glow of the flames the faces of three men. They were Adolf Hitler, Hermann Goering, and Josef Goebbels.

The thinking apparatus of the man in the Berlin street does not function swiftly. Thus, the first thing that occurred to him when he saw the Nazi trio was that the men had come to render assistance in any way they could. That they did not stir a hand or foot did not matter. They were there, no doubt, to encourage others.

But soon everyone was asking how a place like the Reichstag *could* catch fire. Somebody had been careless. Perhaps a lighted cigar had been thrown down.

An English journalist who approached Hitler and asked him to make a statement, got from the Chancellor the curt phrase, "This is a God-given sign. Now no one will prevent us from destroying the Communists with iron fists."

It was strange that about midnight the Nazis should issue

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a long statement to the Press, withdraw it immediately, and then reissue it about two in the morning.

Let us say that it was Dr. Goebbels, in his anxiety to get home his propaganda against the Communists, who had acted with too much zeal. For no sooner had the statement been issued the first time, than it was realized the foreign Press, at all events, would want to know how they managed to prepare a statement so quickly.

Fortunately for the Nazis no foreign newspaper got hold of the statement the first time. That it was ready soon after the outbreak of the fire, however, is proved by the declaration of certain people connected with high quarters in Berlin.

Who fired the Reichstag?

The Nazis said it was the Communists. They arrested at the scene of the fire a Dutchman of weak intellect, named Marinus van der Lubbe. They alleged that he had in his pocket papers proving his connection with the Communists.

It was later shown without shadow of doubt that van der Lubbe did enter the Reichstag by one of the windows just before the fire broke out. But was he the sole person responsible?

A fantastic reconstruction of the crime was made by the Nazi prosecutors when van der Lubbe, Ernst Torgler, leader of the Parliamentary Communist Party, and the Bulgarian Communists Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev, were charged with having fired the Reichstag.

The trial was a farce. Van der Lubbe acted as if he were feeble-minded. His replies to questions were incoherent, but he confessed to having committed the crime.

This is the evidence which the prosecution offered. Van der Lubbe was said to have secured an entry to the Reichstag, and set fire to the material in the linen cupboard by tearing up his own shirt and igniting it. He was about to set fire to some curtains in the assembly chamber when the police rushed in and caught him in the act.

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Now, in actual fact, the fire spread so quickly that it was certain it could not have been ignited in such a simple way. Moreover, a considerable quantity of incendiary material was discovered in the place.

The trial had to be held in public, which was an embarrassment to the Nazis. It attracted the world's journalists, and produced many sensations, particularly when Goering, called as a witness, turned himself into prosecuting counsel, and called Dimitrov a scoundrel who deserved to be executed at once.

Considerable logic was brought to bear on the Reichstag affair by an inquiry in London which concluded on the very day the trial began at Leipzig. The conclusions of the inquiry were:

"No connection whatever can be traced between the Communist party and the burning of the Reichstag. Grave grounds exist for suspecting that the Reichstag was set on fire by, or on behalf of, leading personalities of the National-Socialist Party."

It was further argued that van der Lubbe was not a member but an opponent of the Communist Party, and that Torgler, Dimitrov and the others were in no way concerned in the affair.

All of them in fact had alibis. As to van der Lubbe it was argued that he could not have been the sole incendiary, for he was ignorant of the lay-out of the Reichstag building, or had only just become acquainted with it. Furthermore, he was half blind.

"In view of these facts," concluded the report, "the large number of fire sites, and the quantity of incendiary material used, tend to establish the fact that van der Lubbe could not have acted alone."

Van der Lubbe was found guilty and sentenced to be beheaded. At that time there was no death sentence for arson. It was introduced a short time after the fire.

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The trial did not begin until September, 1933. By that time the evidence had already been sifted by foreign newspapers, and the conclusion made that it was the Nazis themselves who had fired the Reichstag. Yet there was no real evidence of this until December, 1934, when a sensational document written by Karl Ernst, who was one of the victims of the so-called purge in June of that year, was published.

Ernst, who was head of the Berlin Storm Troopers, declared that he acted with two other Storm Troop leaders under the supervision of Goering and Goebbels with Van der Lubbe as the figurehead. The object was to burn the Reichstag and lay the blame on the Communists.

Karl Ernst had prepared the confession because he knew that he was doomed to be murdered if he did not escape. The document was written on June 3rd, and was countersigned by his two confederates, and then smuggled into Sweden. It reached the hands of Dr. Branting, the Swedish statesman, who kept it secret, but eventually had it published.

Ernst had stipulated that the document should not be made public except on his orders, or on the orders of his two companions, or in the event of his meeting a violent death.

Ernst alleged that Goering and Goebbels were prejudiced against the Storm Troopers, and wanted to do away with their leaders.

In setting fire to the building Ernst declared that he and the two other Storm Troop leaders were acting in the belief that they were saving Hitler and the Party, and Germany, and were ruining Communism, which they themselves thought was the greatest enemy of Germany.

He explained how he came into contact with Goering and Goebbels. One day he was visited by a man calling himself Helldorf, who asked him to go and see Goering. This was some time before the fire took place. He went with

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Helldorf to Goering's house. Present were Goebbels and others. Certain measures were discussed to discredit the Communists. It was at first suggested that a faked attempt should be made on Hitler's life, but this idea was abandoned.

Two days later Ernst saw Goering again. This time Goebbels was not present. Again schemes were discussed, but without anything definite being settled.

At a third meeting, a fire was suggested. The Imperial Castle of the former Kaiser was one of the buildings marked down. Goebbels, however, suggested the Reichstag, and it was decided that Ernst should begin the fire with the assistance of the two other troop leaders, Fiedler and Mohrenschild.

It was arranged that they should enter the Reichstag through a tunnel that led from Goering's house. Goering was to supply them with plenty of inflammable material. They visited the building several times, and explored the cellars.

The date of the fire was first fixed for February 25th. Then it was changed to February 26th. But Goebbels who realized that a Sunday was a bad day for publicity because there were no newspapers, persuaded them to change the date. Whereupon the date was advanced to February 27th.

The final meeting took place the day before the fire, and at that meeting Helldorf announced that he had found an excellent "stooge" in van der Lubbe, who could be persuaded to assist in the crime.

It was arranged that the Dutchman should be admitted by a window in the café or bar of the Reichstag, and then he should proceed to set fire to the upper part of the building, while the other three men fired the remainder.

The scheme worked without a hitch.

They had plenty of inflammable material, petrol and phosphorus. In a few minutes from the time they had applied the matches these modern Guy Fawkes had accomplished their task.

Giving evidence during the trial, Lieutenant Lateit, the

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first police officer to enter the Reichstag—during the blaze, said he thought that the plenary chamber could have been saved. When he saw it at 9.20 p.m. only the curtains behind the Speaker's tribune were burning.

When Herr Gemppe, the Fire Brigade Director of Berlin, was blamed for the inadequacy of the measures that he took to extinguish the fire, he replied that he had been summoned too late, and that he had been forbidden by Goering to issue a general call for a stronger force to fight the fire.

He added that in the parts of the Reichstag building that were not destroyed there was a large quantity of incendiary material, enough to fill a large lorry.

How did this incendiary material get there? Van der Lubbe could not have carried it in. Neither could it have got into the building through any of the normal entrances. There is only one solution: it was taken into the Reichstag through the tunnel that led to Goering's house.

Little more need be said of the Reichstag fire. That it was deliberately engineered to throw the blame on the Communists there is not the shadow of a doubt.

It achieved its purpose. Within a few days of the fire thousands of persons were arrested. Warrants had been issued, together with photographs, three hours after the outbreak. The warrants had the appearance of having been prepared beforehand.

The Nazis made a complete sweep of the Communist members of Parliament, and Nazi Storm Troops were given power to arrest on sight any suspected Communist.

The Left Press was completely suppressed.

These precautions resulted, as anticipated, in a one-sided trial. There were no Communists to give evidence on behalf of the accused.

What opposition remained against the National-Socialists appeared to be of little consequence. Hitler would become supreme head of Germany.

Yet, strangely enough, the elections were not a sweeping triumph for the Nazis. They increased their representation in the Reichstag to 288 seats. This was 44 per cent of the total, but with the Nationalists they had a bare majority.

But as there were no Communists in the Reichstag, although a large block of 81 had been elected, the only opposition against Hitler came from the Centre Party, and Hitler was in power.

Terror was loosed. The Nationalists disappeared into the National-Socialist Party. Hugenberg, leader of the Nationalists, found his imaginary castles disintegrating like snow in a thaw, and gave in.

Hitler issued an order abolishing every political party but the Nazis. "The National Socialist German Workers' Party is the only political party in Germany," he said. "Whoever undertakes to maintain the organization of another political party, is to be punished with imprisonment." Nazi racketeers and adventurers filled the key posts of the Government.

The German people were helpless. Hitler, appending his signature to a few documents, effectually took away any liberties that they possessed. No one could do business without the mark of the Nazi Beast—the Swastika.

But what of the Socialists? They, of all parties, had tried to effect stable government in Germany. They had as little chance of being heard as the Communists. According to the National-Socialist creed they were half-way towards Nazism already. They had only to tack the word "Nationalist"—paradox though it was—to their existing creed. They did it. It was safer, and the line of least resistance. They came in straggling, but come in they did, and Germany was Nazified—on the surface.

The Trade Unions were abolished. The German Labour Front was formed instead. It gave the workers an opportunity to parade as they had been in the habit of doing. Admittedly

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they got a great many more opportunities for self-expression, in the various spare-time occupations and sports which Hitler provided for them.†

Satan found nothing for idle hands to do, for there were no idle hands.

Hitler established the National Labour Corps in which more than a quarter of a million young men worked reclaiming the land under military discipline. These could at any moment be drafted into the army.

Having all power in his hands, the Fuehrer was able to introduce wide reforms, at the same time suppressing everything and everybody opposed to National-Socialism.

But now also began one of the most diabolical persecutions in history—a persecution which made Abdul Hamid, the Red Sultan, look like a Sunday School teacher. It was the systematic and official suppression of the Jews.

The Jews for a long time had been fearful of what would happen when the Nazis secured power. They began to hope when in March, 1933, Goering declared: "If the Jews behave loyally to the National-Socialist Party, and keep to their own businesses they have nothing to fear."

Other Nazi speakers gave similar undertakings.

But those assurances were not worth the energy expended in their utterance. Within a few months of Hitler's rise to the Chancellorship, Julius Streicher became official Jew-baiter. He brought out the old bogey that the Jews used the blood of Christians for ritual purposes. Nobody but the least intelligent of mortals could, one assumes, be influenced by this lie, despite the illustrations alleging "ritual murders" by Jews during the past 2,000 years, which appeared in Streicher's publication, *Stuermer*. Yet the lie achieved its object. This was to secure for the Nazi Party the wealth of the Jews.

There was a storm of protest at first. Hitler himself quailed. The persecution had international repercussions.

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Streicher's newspaper was confiscated "on account of an attack on the Christian communion."

But that did not stop the flood that had begun. Within a few weeks villages were cleared of the Jews, and Streicher's Aryan policy was being generally adopted in Germany.

There were stories that Hitler had given Streicher a horse-whipping. Streicher denied it. He declared that it was he himself who had horsewhipped a political prisoner. Meanwhile *Stuerner* was allowed to reappear and go on with its Jew-baiting policy.

We will follow Streicher through the years. His subsequent career was interesting, quite as interesting as his earlier activities. He celebrated his fiftieth birthday in February, 1935, under the auspices of the Fuehrer. For his constancy to the great Adolf Hitler, Streicher received a bouquet in the shape of a spoken eulogy. But Streicher's birthday present from the Nuremberg police was much more acceptable. It was a dossier of his conduct in former years. The contents of that dossier have not been made public, but they are said to have been particularly damaging.

The least damaging of the contents showed that he had been a school teacher who had lost his job in German Republican days for his political views.

On the accession of the Nazis Streicher saw to it that those who had dismissed him were sent to a concentration camp.

It was in August, 1935, that Streicher's Jew-baiting campaign began to attain momentum. More responsible periodicals than *Stuerner* took up the non-Aryan bogey. It was found that there were about half a million confessing Jews in Germany. On August 15th, Nazi cohorts fell upon the Jews in Berlin.

In April, 1926, the bodies of two children, terribly mutilated, had been found in a village near Nuremberg. Although a young man had confessed to the crime, that did not worry the Nazis. Here was a splendid opportunity of laying an

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atrocities on the Jews. Thus nine years afterwards this crime was transformed into a Jewish "blood" outrage.

German people swallowed the story and Streicher had his excuse to go ahead. Jew-baiting became policy.

"We note with amazement that your list of customers includes the following Jewish firms. . . . Your explanation is awaited. Heil, Hitler!"

This was the kind of circular letter that Streicher sent out from the offices of *Stuerner*.

He did so well in this campaign that he was invited to Berlin to make it a national campaign. Before 20,000 astonished Berliners who had hitherto no complaints against the Jews, Streicher scored a great success.

The Berliners walked into the plot with their eyes open. General extirpation of the Jews was now the order of the day. Children's fairy-tale witches became Jews under the wand of Julius Streicher.

Sometimes Streicher slipped up. On one occasion he was called before a Berlin Court to show cause why he had called a certain Princess a Jew. He had to apologize in *Stuerner*.

It was not until the early part of 1939 that Hitler realized that he had made a terrible blunder in persecuting the Jews. To the "dispersed" he sent out a cry "Come back!" There was no answer, though Hitler offered to restore to them their lost possessions. They were content to suffer, knowing that Nemesis would overcome the persecutors of their race. It has always been so in the past.

Hitler became a little cold towards Streicher. The rift widened. The Fuehrer stopped the activities of *Stuerner*. Streicher tried a come-back before 200,000 Nazis at Nuremberg. They applauded his sermon proclaiming the devil to be a Jew. Streicher further blundered when he attacked the Pope for his condemnation of the atrocities against the Semites.

Streicher's final idiocy was to condemn smoking which he said caused sterility in women.

After that extraordinary declaration he simmered down.

What was the real motive behind the persecution of the Jews?

The Nazis argued that they had acquired great influence in the State which they used to their own ends. It is true that they controlled banks, the Press, cinema concerns, the theatres, and were out of all proportion in medicine, law and politics.

How did that come about?

The answer is simple. The Germans, since Prussia became dominant, have always had a queer idea of what constituted an honourable occupation. Thus the Army officers, the great landlords, the civil servants, the industrialists, the artisans, the peasants and even the common workers stood in greater esteem than the small traders, the journalists, the cinema proprietors, the bankers, the lawyers and the doctors.

The Jews were not encouraged to enter those trades and professions which the young Germans wanted for themselves. The Jews took what they could get, and strangely enough, those trades and professions gave greater opportunities for progress.

My friend, Dr. F. R. Bienenfeld, himself a Jewish refugee, puts the situation in a nutshell in his book *The Germans and the Jews*.

He relates that he overheard a conversation between an Austrian official and a Jew before Germany's great bank crisis.

"Can you explain to me, my dear Director," asked the Austrian, "why there are so few Christian bank directors of rank and influence in Vienna?"

"Because," was the reply, "you yourself, if your son were to tell you that he wanted to become a banker, merchant, or still worse, a stockbroker, would immediately reply to

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him without a moment's hesitation: 'Misguided youth, I'll cut you off with a shilling.' "

It is not to be assumed that Jews have any more talent for these professions and trades than any other nation. In other countries where there is not a prejudice against these occupations, the Jews have no predominance.

Then, what happened in Germany when the Jews were expelled from these professions? One would naturally surmise that the Germans rushed to fill them.

Nothing of the kind. The old prejudice still remained. No one wanted jobs as bank directors and journalists, and those professions faded out of existence. The German banks became State departments without any opportunities for those who worked in them. A position in a bank was regarded as a State appointment. The newspapers have all been Nazified, and are also regarded as Civil Service jobs for the dissemination of official news.

As to politics, this profession was regarded with disgust by Germans. No honest citizen would engage himself in politics. Indeed, to be a member of the Reichstag was one of the least of honours.

Jews found their way there because Germans would not take the jobs. The Germans have never had, and never wanted a democratic constitution, simply because they would not take part in the government of their country. They much preferred to have their politics, such as they were, dished up on a plate ready for consumption.

I have already explained, in dealing with the rise of Hitler, that the Germans will always follow the loudest voice or the heaviest fist. This explains how it was through German history that dictators were able to seize control of and change the whole history of the nation. Examples are Charlemagne, Frederick the Great, Bismarck and Hitler. Had Walther Rathenau been an Aryan, he would have been dictator of Germany long before Hitler. In the old Germany before the

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Great War, Jews were barred from holding officers' rank in the Army. Very few were allowed even under the Republic. When the Republic banned them entirely from the ranks of the Army, only five officers, two cadets and thirty-one non-commissioned officers and men were found in the Reichwehr.

Thus, it will be seen that even under the Republic the profession of arms was still the most important in the State. This is a striking proof of the fact that militarism never died out under the so-called peace-loving government which tried to tell the Allies that it was full of the milk of human kindness.

The fact that the Jews in Germany and Austria had secured control of certain professions was no excuse for persecution. The Jews were forced into those very professions which, curiously enough, happened to be the most important in the nation, though they were despised by the Germans.

When figures are considered an astonishing situation is revealed. There were, before the dispersal, about 500,000 Jews in Germany, representing about 1 per cent of the population. Yet in the Faculty of Medicine 45 per cent were Jews, while in the chief hospitals well over 50 per cent of the doctors were Jews. Taking an average of all the large towns the legal profession was 60 per cent Jewish. There was a similar situation in the theatrical management, in the newspapers, in finance, and in chain stores.

How easy it was, therefore, to raise the Jew bogey among the people.

Nobody would suggest that Germany was the first to persecute Jews. Semites have had a rough time all down the ages. But while most nations tolerate them and even give them as much freedom as their own nationals, the Nazis in this so-called enlightened twentieth century chose to go back to the Dark Ages for an election cry. To say the least, it lacked originality.

But it was not only the Jews that suffered. Christians

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suffered too. Hitler promptly began an attack on the Catholic Church, and followed it up with persecution of the Protestant Church. He charged both sects with political activities.

It is not surprising that the Churches had something to say about the activities of the Nazis. Their day by day atrocities were bound to bring condemnation from the pulpit. It was not a question of politics but of humanity. No Christian pastor or priest could condone the horrors.

There was another reason for Hitler's attack on Christianity. In effect, he declared: "There shall be no other God but me."

It was a disastrous mistake for him to persecute either the Jews or Christians. Somewhere in Germany one presumes there is still a heart.

And that heart beats time to Luther.

To show the world that there could be no other boss of Germany but himself, Hitler, in February, 1934, insisted upon a mass swearing-in of Nazi leaders.

"I swear to Adolf Hitler undying loyalty, and to the leaders he appoints, unshakable obedience."

One million officials of the Nazi Party swore this solemn oath. They included 800,000 workers' leaders, 130,000 Hitler youth leaders, 43,000 maiden officers, and 18,500 voluntary labour camp commandants.

In the great Lustgarten, the Hyde Park of Berlin, 2,000 Nazi flags waved in the breeze.

In Munich, the people were no less enthusiastic. There was a great demonstration in the same beer cellar in which Hitler, fourteen years before that very day, had announced his twenty-five points of the Nazi Party policy, beginning "Freedom from Versailles . . . freedom from Reparations . . . freedom from the Jews. . . ."

In Munich he was back in his spiritual home. He loved anniversaries; he loved to go back to the places where he had been spurned in the past.

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"The sacrifices of the dead," said Germany's dictator, "have taught us that no one must hesitate for a second if fate should again demand the same sacrifice from us."

Declaring that he intended to appeal to Germany for a vote of confidence in a plebiscite at least once a year to get support for everything he did, he concluded: "One German people, one German nation, strong, free, respected, full of joy of life, because life has again become possible—that is our desire."

After that, Hitler hurried to Berlin by air, and reached the capital in time for a great military pageant which he witnessed in the company of President von Hindenburg. Hermann Goering was in a steel helmet and a general's uniform. Little Josef Goebbels was in a black suit.

But the oaths of loyalty that were taken on that day did not prevent one of the most terrible tragedies of the National-Socialist movement.

Chapter 10

Purge

While the majority of the German people slept on the night of June 29th-30th, 1934, cold-blooded murder was being committed all over the country.

Soon after dark, S.S. men—Hitler's Black Guards—issued from their depots in small companies bound for secret rendezvous.

There was activity, too, in the barracks of the Reichwehr. Weapons were served out, and the men ordered to be ready to move at a moment's notice.

Another body—the S.A. or Brown Shirts—about three million strong, were going on leave at the orders of Hitler.

Captain Ernst Roehm, commander of the S.A., although not averse from taking a holiday, was a little perplexed. This sudden order to dismiss his men had a sinister implication. He had every reason to believe he was still a personal friend of Adolf Hitler. But one could never tell. Moreover, he knew that the Reichwehr objected to the continued existence of the S.A.

So, in dismissing his men, Roehm delivered the following warning: "If enemies of the S.A. are foolish enough to believe that the S.A. will not return from its leave, or return only in part, we shall allow them to enjoy the thought for the time being. These people will get their answer at the appropriate time."

Roehm ascertained that Hitler was in the Rhineland with Goebbels. They had gone there to attend a wedding. Goering was in Berlin.

Everything seemed peaceful enough, and Roehm was lulled into a condition of false security. So confident did he feel that everything was all right at that moment that he determined to enjoy his holiday. On the night of the 29th, therefore, after issuing his dismissal to the S.A., he went to a wayside inn near the Wiesee Lake, about thirty miles from Munich. He dined well, but not too wisely. For in the small hours of the morning he had to be taken to bed completely clothed.

At 4 a.m. a knock came on his door.

"Who's there?" he cried.

There was no response for a moment.

"Who's there?" cried Roehm again.

At length the answer came, in a quiet voice.

"Adolf Hitler."

Roehm jumped out of bed in his clothing, minus jacket and boots.

"Adolf!" he cried delightedly.

He unlocked the door. Adolf Hitler walked in.

Not a semblance of a smile lit up the sulky features of Adolf Hitler.

"What's the matter, Adolf?" asked Roehm.

"Come with me," was the reply.

Then Roehm noticed that behind Hitler was a party of S.S. men.

The Captain demanded to know what was afoot. His features were now a picture of mixed perplexity and fear.

"Come with me," Hitler repeated.

The Commander of the S.A. put on his boots and jacket and followed Hitler and his party to motor-cars filled with S.S. men.

The next act in this drama occurred a few hours later in

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the prison at Stadelheim. A revolver was thrust into Roehm's hands. The inference was obvious.

"Let Adolf shoot me himself," said Roehm, uttering a string of curses.

Adolf, however, had no intention of shooting Roehm himself. Even he was a little squeamish at committing such a cold-blooded murder of the friend who had stood by his side ever since the abortive Munich days.

Exactly when Roehm met his death is not known. It was probably the following day or the day after. Accounts differ on the point. It is known, however, that he ultimately faced a firing squad, cursing everyone as he fell.

Meanwhile the shadowy figures that had issued from one depot or another on that night had done their diabolical work. In the Munich area there was a massacre of S.A. leaders. Heines, second in command of the Storm Troops, was shot at as he lay in bed with his chauffeur in the same inn at which Roehm was staying. Dozens of others were "liquidated" in the same way.

The Munich atrocities, however, were nothing compared with what occurred at Berlin. In charge there was Goering, whose instructions were that General Kurt von Schleicher was not to escape.

Goering went about the job with an amazing thoroughness, that must have called for the approval of "Mein Fuehrer."

Terror reigned for three days. It was an unprecedented clean-up. Everyone suspected of having said a word against Hitler was assassinated. The murder gangs even overstepped their instructions. It was an opportunity for personal animosities to be avenged. In many cases murders were committed for sheer lust of blood. Persons who were in no way opposed to the Nazi regime were done to death.

But the murder of Schleicher was the most diabolical of the series.

The official Nazi account of this murder is candid.

"General von Schleicher," it relates, "resisted arrest with arms. In exchange of shots that followed, he and his wife, who threw herself between the detectives and her husband, were both killed."

That was not quite a truthful account, despite its brevity and apparent candour.

The reason for the murder of Schleicher, according to the claim of the Nazis, was that he was working in co-operation with the Storm Troops in antagonism to the State, and had also entered into correspondence with foreign Powers. "His actions against the State, and its leadership were established," says the official report. "These facts made his arrest necessary."

The true account of the murder of Schleicher is well known. Schleicher was speaking on the telephone when S.S. men rushed into the room.

"Just a moment," he said to the person at the other end, "there is someone in the room."

He looked up. He had no chance to say a word. A shot rang out. Schleicher slumped to the floor. His wife rushed into the room shrieking. The Nazi blood lust did not end with the husband. The wife, too, fell with a bullet in her body.

The man responsible for that murder was Hermann Goering. He has many times since declared that he is a humane man, though people do not believe him. This paunched Assistant Leader of Germany, the man who loads himself with orders and decorations, was once the commander of the famous air-squadron, which earned the admiration of the Allied Air Force during the Great War, because of its daring. No one questions the bravery of Hermann Goering, but that he is no better than the brute beasts that he keeps in his Prussian preserves has been confirmed time after time since the Nazis achieved power in Germany.

"I admit," he said, "that I expanded the original scope of

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my instructions." But he showed no remorse. The elephantine bully merely grinned. It was as good—even better—than shooting his own big game.

It is said that Hitler did not intend such a wholesale slaughter of malcontents. His hired assassins got out of control. That requires some believing, for there is no evidence that he took disciplinary action against the murderers.

Hitler issued a statement declaring that not more than fifty persons were killed. A week later, under pressure, he confessed to seventy-six. Reliable reports put the massacre at about three hundred. Many victims were placed with their back to the wall, and shot by firing parties. Some did not even get the courtesy of a drum-head court-martial. They died murmuring "Heil, Hitler," believing the whole thing to be a plot against the Fuehrer.

Attempts were made to arrest ex-Chancellor Dr. Bruening, though what offence he had committed against the Nazi regime is obscure. Dr. Bruening was not the type to plot in anything of the kind. It is known, however, that he was entertaining one of Hitler's opponents when the S.S. troopers called at his home.

The two men escaped over the garden wall. Dr. Bruening finally got away from Germany into Holland in disguise. Later he went to America.

This so-called purge was complete in every detail. It must have been planned weeks in advance. For, everyone known to have opposition to Hitler was "liquidated." The victims included old enemies of the Leader, such as Von Kahr, his Munich adversary, and Gregor Strasser, who is said on one occasion to have opposed Hitler's ruthlessness.

The murder of Gregor Strasser brought Hitler into conflict with a man who may eventually prove Hitler's undoing. He is Gregor's brother, Otto.

Dr. Otto Strasser has since likened Hitler to an "hysterical woman rejected by her lover." When the present war broke

out, he was one of the first to prophesy defeat for Germany.

He is said to be the head of the so-called Black Front, which is neither Nazi nor Communist, and which operates secretly against the Nazi regime. Hitler fears him more than any other man.

The Black Front has existed since the Purge. It is slow in action, but sure and deadly.

Dr. Otto was never a whole-hearted supporter of Hitler. He left the Nazi Party and formed what was known as the Schwarz Front, though his brother remained in the Nazi Party. Dr. Otto survived the Purge because he was not in the country when it occurred.

Hundreds of moderate Germans have rallied to the Black Front, which, of course, works outside Germany. It is so cleverly hidden that the Gestapo have been unable to arrest its activities.

Dr. Strasser has lived in various countries since he left Germany. For a time he was in Czechoslovakia, but escaped from that country when the Nazis walked in. The Black Front is said to have been behind certain go-slow policies of German workers that have occurred since the outbreak of the present war. It is claimed that the organization has thousands of agents in various countries.

General Kurt von Schleicher was as important a symbol of German warfare mentality as Hindenburg. During the Great War he was on the staff of Ludendorff. During the Republic, as we have already related, he acted in an advisory capacity to Ebert's Government, until at length he was appointed Minister for Defence.

Known as Germany's Man of Iron, he was Minister of Defence in September, 1932, when Germany repudiated that Clause of the Treaty of Versailles which restricted armaments. He claimed German equality in armaments with the Allies. At that time a Disarmament Conference was being held. Schleicher's demands put an end to disarmament.

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Schleicher was the creator of the new Reichwehr. The fact that the Republican Government made use of him is evidence that they had not abolished the old tradition of militarism.

Hitler, following the Purge, was called upon to give an explanation to the Reichstag. He waited as long as possible hoping the clamour would die down. Then he had the audacity to declare: "For twenty-four hours I was the supreme Court of Justice of the German people."

Goebbels did his best to throw mud at the victims of the Purge. He declared that they were homosexuals, and therefore not fit to live.

Hitler's own statement was full of inaccuracies and misrepresentations. If the Reichstag members, however, noticed these discrepancies, they refrained from saying so. A still tongue makes a wise head.

Hitler was now supreme in Germany. His political opponents no longer opposed him. He had cleaned up the unruly elements in his party. The aged President von Hindenburg took little notice of what had occurred. The Last Post for him was about to sound.

Meanwhile Hitler began the policy which almost the whole of Germany, Nazi or anti-Nazi, had been anticipating so long—the systematic repudiation of the Versailles Treaty. Some of the clauses of that Treaty were already dead letters, but there were much more important ones yet to repudiate.

Hitler proceeded at once to make the clauses look foolish on paper. Rearmament was begun feverishly. On this question he asked for a vote of confidence—another plebiscite. The Reichstag was no longer the medium for the Government of Germany. The Reichstag members had become "Yes-men." From Hitler's point of view plebiscites were much to be preferred. They are never what they appear to be. The ballot can easily be influenced for a voter if he is asked merely to say "Yes" or "No," and he is too scared to

say the latter. Hitler got a 92·3 per cent vote, but the number of abstentions is believed to have been fairly large.

The Last Post for Hindenburg—it came on August 13th, 1934—was the Réveille for Hitler. He promptly appointed himself both President and Reich Chancellor, to the astonishment even of his own party. With one stroke he solved the problem of appointing a successor to the Chancellorship. Once more he appealed for a vote of confidence and got it.

The democratic nations could now see that the sands were running out. Their grip upon Germany was merely a token one. The Allies looked upon the activities of Hitler with misgiving, yet hoped for signs of conciliation. He made no secret of his feelings on the question of the Versailles Treaty. But what he intended to do was nobody's business, it seemed.

By a process of prevarication, promising this and that, with alternate threats and offers of friendship, this Austrian hod-carrier kept Britain and France and the rest of the world guessing.

"I am ready to negotiate," he frequently declared. But underlying this declaration was the insistence upon the abrogation of the Treaty. He intended that the Allies should concede all his demands first.

They did not take him seriously. They hoped that the German people would not stand him for long.

But they did stand him. They were even grateful to him.

For some years they had suffered with an inferiority complex. Hitler had revived the gospel of blood and iron. He began systematically to turn butter into guns.

Hitler's first great achievement was the reclamation of the Saar territory in March, 1935.

For fifteen years from 1920 to 1935, the League of Nations undertook the administration of this small but important part of Germany.

By the Treaty of Versailles, Germany ceded to France

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"as compensation for the destruction of the coal mines in the North of France, and as part payment towards the total reparations due from Germany for the damage resulting from the war, the full and absolute possession" of the Saar mines. Meanwhile, the League of Nations was deputed to administer the territory.

At the end of the fifteen years from the date of the Treaty the Saar inhabitants were to be allowed "to indicate the sovereignty under which they desired to be placed."

The territory consisted of the Saar mine workings, and the additional area in which the miners lived. In 1935 the Saar had a population of about 800,000 with about 400 inhabitants to the square kilometre.

The chief town was Saarbruck with 130,000 inhabitants. The largest industry is coal-mining, the yearly output being about ten million tons, with employment for 50,000 men.

The Saar has also a large steel and iron industry with at least thirty blast furnaces, the annual output being about two million tons. There are also large steel works. The iron and steel industries also employ about 50,000 men.

Preparations were made to hold the Saar plebiscite as early as June, 1934. An appropriate resolution was made by the Council of the League of Nations. Germany, a member of the League and Council had given notice of withdrawal from the League in October, 1933, and therefore refrained from taking part in the Council's discussions on the plebiscite.

On the other hand, Germany agreed with France to abstain from any pressure on the voters, either direct or indirect, or to take reprisals against persons having the right to vote. The two Governments also agreed that any differences that might arise concerning the plebiscite should be submitted to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague.

As the date of the plebiscite approached, there seemed a possibility of trouble. There was a strained political situa-

tion in the Saar territory, and on several occasions the League of Nations Commission had to take severe action to maintain order.

In June, 1934, the police and local gendarmerie were increased by local recruitment. In the following December, however, the situation had become so serious that it was decided to maintain order by international contingents, among which neither France nor Germany were represented.

Germany was approached and agreed to this course.

The plebiscite was held on January 13th, 1935. On Tuesday, January 15th, the result was announced. It had been a foregone conclusion that the people of the Saar would elect to return to Germany. There was an overwhelming majority in favour of it.

The formal transfer of the Saar territory to Germany took place on March 1st, 1935. Although this was not a personal triumph for Hitler, he made it appear so.

At the ceremony, Dr. Frick, Reich Minister of the Interior, declared: "This event is not solely of importance to Germany. It closes a chapter in European politics which has handicapped the good relations between two great neighbouring peoples during recent years. The German Government is convinced that the settlement of the Saar problem marks a step towards the improvement in the general political situation in Europe and towards peaceful collaboration between peoples."

They were fine words, but not sincere.

In the afternoon Hitler reached Saarbruck. He received the members of the Committee of the League Council at the City Hall. He recorded his personal thanks and those of the German people, and added that it was gratifying that such a delicate matter had been settled.

Within a fortnight or so, Europe had a shock. Adolf Hitler on March 16th decreed conscription throughout Germany. The arguments he used for this measure were that other Powers had failed to disarm, and that France had

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extended the period of military service, and the Soviet Government of Russia had increased the Army to 101 divisions.

Early in the year, Britain and France had invited Germany to co-operate in a "general settlement," which would, among other things, free Germany from the restrictions of Versailles. Hitler insisted upon separate, private talks instead of an open conference, and invited Sir John Simon to Berlin. He fixed March 7th as the day for the visit.

One would have thought after Dr. Frick's apparently conciliatory speech at the handing over of the Saar, that Hitler would have been ready to talk over a settlement.

But four days after the Saar ceremony the invitation to Sir John Simon was suspended because Hitler had caught a cold. On March 10th General Hermann Goering announced that Germany had an air force, a defence arm that was forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles.

Hitler waited until the conscription decree was issued before again inviting Sir John Simon. His cold, it was announced, was better. The invitation was accepted.

But Hitler was merely playing for time. The visit was a waste of time.

On May 21st, Hitler again fooled Europe with the statement: "The German Government will scrupulously observe every treaty voluntarily concluded. In particular, they will hold to and fulfil all obligations arising out of the Treaty of Locarno, so long as the other partners are ready to stand by that Treaty . . .

"Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an Anschluss."

At this time Nazis were saying strange things for the purpose of propaganda. Here are some of them:—

"Hitler is lonely. So is God. Hitler is like God."—Dr. Frank, Reich Commissioner for Justice.

"The bright red mouth of the Nordic attracts and provokes kisses and courtship. The Nordic mouth is kiss-capable."—Professor Hermann Gauch.

"National-Socialism and Christianity are indissolubly bound up together."—Herr Schemm, Bavarian Minister of Education.

"A man who thinks he can combine Christianity with National-Socialism is neither a true Christian nor a true National-Socialist."—Professor Ernst Bergmann.

"It is a sacrifice for us not to have a new war."—Dr. Josef Goebbels.

"Our task is to ensure peace."—Adolf Hitler.

"Hitler is the most exquisite connoisseur of art who ever stood at the head of a great nation."—Oberpräsident Kube.

"I prefer a military march to all the muck of a new-fangled fiddling man."—Adolf Hitler.

These sayings are samples of the nonsense which the Nazis put out for the edification of the credulous German people.

As to Hitler himself, he lied consistently from the time he became Reich Chancellor.

Here are some of his declarations. They are absurd in the light of subsequent events.

"The first and best point of the Government's programme is that we won't lie and we won't swindle."—Berlin, February 10th, 1933.

"Weighing the sacrifices of the last war, we want to be true friends of a peace which will at last heal the wounds from which we have suffered."—Potsdam, March 21st, 1933.

"Germany, France and Poland will continue to exist. Germany wants nothing that she is not ready to give to others. . . .

"No fresh European war is capable of putting something better in the place of unsatisfactory conditions which exist to-day. . . . The outbreak of such madness without end

would lead to the collapse of existing social order in Europe. . . . The German Government are convinced that to-day there can be only one great task, and that is to assure the peace of the world. . . .

"The German Government wish to settle all difficult questions with other Governments by peaceful methods. They know that any military action in Europe even if completely successful, would in view of the sacrifice, bear no relation to the profit to be obtained . . .

"Germany will tread no other path than that laid down by the Treaties. The German Government will discuss all political and economic questions only within the framework of, and through the Treaties. . . .

"The German people have no thought of invading any country."—Berlin, May 17, 1933.

"We do not want a war merely for the purpose of bringing in the people who simply do not want to be, or cannot be, Germans."—Wireless broadcast, May 27th, 1933.

On October 14th, when Germany left the League of Nations, Hitler spoke on the wireless again:

"The history of the last 150 years should, in its changing course, have taught France and Germany that essential and enduring changes are no longer to be gained by the sacrifice of blood. As a National-Socialist I, with all my followers, refuse on the basis of our national principles to win for ourselves the members of other nations, who will never love us, at the cost of the blood and lives of those who are dear to us. It would be a mighty happening for all humanity if these two nations of Europe would banish once and for all, force from their common life. The German people is ready to do so. . . . No one could demand that millions of men in the flower of youth should be annihilated for the sake of a readjustment of indefinite scope of our present frontier. . . ."

"There are Germans and Poles in Europe, and they ought to

live together in agreement. The Poles cannot think of Europe without the Germans, and the Germans cannot think of Europe without the Poles.”—Berlin, October 24th, 1933.

“I am not crazy enough to want a war. The German people have but one wish—to be happy in their own way, and to be left in peace. They do not interfere in other people’s business, and others should not interfere in theirs. . . . When has the German people ever broken its word?” . . . —Berlin, November 10th, 1933.

These are all declarations made by Hitler within a year of securing the supreme power in Germany. When he was contemplating a certain move, he forthwith proceeded to deny that he had such a move in mind.

His utterances in 1934 are even more significant. In a speech at Berlin, on January 13th, of that year, he reiterated the desire of the German people to live at peace with their neighbours. Said he: “The new German Reich has fundamentally no other wish in its attitude towards other peoples and States than to live in peace and friendship with them. We are convinced that it must be again possible in this world to talk over differences in the lives of nations without always at once thinking of a resort to force . . .

“Germans and Poles must reconcile themselves as to the fact of each other’s existence. It has seemed to me necessary to demonstrate by an example that it is possible for two nations to talk over their differences without giving the task to a third or fourth Power. . . .

“The assertion that the German Reich plans to coerce the Austrian State is absurd and cannot be substantiated or proved. . . . The assertion of the Austrian Government that from the side of the Reich an attack would be undertaken or planned, I most emphatically reject. . . . The German Reich is always ready to hold out a hand for a real understanding, with full respect for the free will of Austrian Germans. . . .”

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The most important part of this speech, for it has a bearing on all the coups that Hitler had in mind was: "After the Saar question has been settled, the German Government is ready to accept not only the letter but the spirit of the Locarno Pact."

On May 21st, 1935, Hitler reiterated all his previous promises, taking them almost categorically. He said:

"Germany will hold to all obligations arising out of Locarno so long as other parties are ready to stand by that Treaty. . . .

"Germany has concluded a non-aggression pact with Poland, which is more than a valuable contribution to European peace, and she will adhere to it unconditionally. . . . We recognize the Polish State as the home of a great patriotic nation with the understanding and cordial friendship of candid nationalists. . . .

"The German Reich, and in particular the present German Government, has no other wish than to live on friendly and peaceable terms with all neighbouring States, not only the larger States, but the neighbouring smaller States. . . .

"Both we National-Socialists and the Bolsheviks are convinced that there is a gulf between us which can never be bridged. . . . So far as ever this Bolshevism draws Germany into its clutches we are the deadliest and most fanatical enemies. . . .

"Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an Anschluss."

Finally at Berlin on November 29th, 1935, Hitler said: "Germany is the bulwark of the West against Bolshevism, and, in combating it, will meet terror with terror and violence with violence."

Chapter 11

Rhineland

“Hitler marches!”

This was the sensational news that newspaper placards carried at midday on Saturday, March 7th, 1936.

Londoners streaming out of offices and factories bought papers eagerly.

Was it war? Where had Hitler marched?

People were not long in doubt. Hitler had reoccupied the Rhineland.

Some nervous people looked up into the skies, expecting the heavens to be darkened by bombers, for there had already been talk about the marvellous air force that Germany possessed.

Thousands went to football matches a little thoughtfully. One could never tell what would be the reaction to this defiance by Hitler. It was his first big step towards the repudiation of the Versailles Treaty. He had sprung his first surprise. It was a challenge to the Allies. Would Britain and France go to war for the sake of the Rhineland?

It was obvious that elaborate preparations had been made in advance. But not even the Reichstag knew what was contemplated.

On the previous day he had summoned that inept body. Troops were already moving when members met on the Saturday. At the same time Hitler handed the Ambassadors

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of Britain, France, Italy and Belgium, the Locarno Pact guarantor Powers, the following note:

"The Government declare themselves liberated from the obligations imposed upon them by the Treaty of Versailles and Locarno. They have effected during the night of Friday and Saturday the reoccupation of the Rhineland zone. The operation is now being completed." It was a curt intimation without apology.

Simultaneously Hitler proposed new pacts, and the entry of Germany into the League of Nations. These proposals included:

A 25-year non-aggression pact between Germany, France and Belgium and possibly Holland, with Great Britain and Italy as guarantors.

A Western air pact.

The return of Germany to the League of Nations.

An offer of non-aggression pacts with the States bordering on Germany in the East.

Hitler concluded with a pious hope that the Colonial problem would be settled amicably during the course of friendly negotiations.

At 11 a.m. G.M.T., the German Ambassador, Herr von Hoesch, presented the note to Mr. Eden at the Foreign Office.

On the previous day the British Government had intimated to the German Government the desire to discuss a Western air pact. That proposal had been made in entire ignorance of Hitler's intention to move into the Rhineland on the following day. Nor did von Hoesch enlighten Mr. Eden as to what was intended.

And this was what Hitler told the Reichstag. Note each point.

Germany will never break the peace of Europe.

We have no territorial claims in Europe.

There is talk of a German question. For us the German

question is one of sixty million people who have the same right to existence as the Frenchman or the Englishman.

One of the problems of the German question is interference by Soviet Russia within the German State.

I am determined once and for all to solve the problem set by the Treaty of 1919 (Versailles).

Germany's rearmament is not the revival of the European problem, but its solution.

It is certainly regrettable that Poland's access to the sea passes through what was formerly German territory, but it would be unreasonable to deny the right of such a nation to access to the sea.

For three years I have tried in vain to establish an understanding with France. Why should it not be possible to set the problem of Europe above the reach of passion, pettiness and jealousy?

The bitterness of war memories is vanishing. Those whom I once regarded as enemies now appear to be honourable fighters. Germany has no interest in seeing France suffer, and France would gain no advantage from German misfortune.

The ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact compels me to consider Germany's position, and to draw my own conclusions no matter how serious they appear.

I do not decline co-operation with Russia, but with Bolshevism's claim to world domination.

Poland will remain Poland, and France will remain France. But Soviet Russia is the champion of a Bolshevik world outlook. It remains to be seen if this will spread to France. Will Paris become a Moscow?

The great armament of Russia is in contradiction to the spirit of the Locarno Pact.

Hitler declared that he had worked three years for a Franco-German understanding, but all his proposals had been rejected. For the British he had a good word to say. They had accepted his proposal for a restricted naval agree-

ment. Yet this was the only evidence that his continued appeals for disarmament had borne fruit.

France received the German note intimating the reoccupation of the Rhineland with consternation.

Would France march? That was the question that everyone was asking. And the anxiety was by no means confined to the man in the street.

Came news that all army leave had been stopped. But the French Government hastened to assure the world that this was "an ordinary army procedure."

Foreign journalists tried to ascertain if there were any French army movements near the Rhineland, but failed to do so, for, in fact, there were none. The Maginot Line had been manned a fortnight before.

In London there were conferences between Foreign Secretary Mr. Anthony Eden and the Ambassadors of the Locarno Powers—France, Italy and Belgium. Later the public read of discussions between Mr. Eden, and the Premier, Mr. Baldwin, at the latter's home at Chequers Court.

While British and French Government officials rushed hither and thither conferring upon the situation, historic scenes were occurring in the Rhineland. Drums played, flags flew, and there were excited shouts of "Heil!" as Hitler's soldiers marched into Cologne, Mainz, Coblenz and Frankfurt.

There was no question about the equipment of this army. The men were sturdy young fellows, bronzed and well trained. As a sample of what Germany could turn out it was an object-lesson in preparedness.

The people of the Rhineland made no secret of their joy. They cast flowers in front of the marchers, rushed forward and pinned posies to their tunics. The Rhine towns were gay with colour and the inhabitants prepared elaborate celebrations for the evening.

Despite the comings and goings of Allied statesmen, it

was pretty certain that nothing would be done to stop Germany. Indeed, the reoccupation was an accomplished fact. It would certainly result in fighting if any attempt were made to eject the German troops.

True, Germany had broken the Locarno Treaty, but she had broken treaties before, and nothing had happened.

Under Article 42 and 43 of the Versailles Treaty, Germany was forbidden to maintain or construct fortifications on the left bank of the Rhine, or within thirty-one miles of the eastern bank. She was also forbidden to assemble armed forces in that area, or to maintain permanent mobilization works.

These Articles were the foundation of the Western Pact Protocol of the Locarno Treaty. Under the Treaty, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and Germany agreed to maintain inviolate the frontiers between Germany and France, and Germany and Belgium.

Hitler's excuse for breaking the Locarno Pact—and break it he did because he gave no notice of wishing to withdraw from it—was that France had concluded a treaty with the Soviet Government. Germany alleged that this violated the Locarno Pact. But on February 25th France had offered to submit Germany's objections to the Franco-Soviet Pact to the International Court at The Hague.

Hitler had seized his chance to reoccupy the Rhineland while the League of Nations were engaged with the vexed problem of Italy's invasion of Abyssinia.

France described Germany's action as "*a fait accompli* in a brutal form," and refused to consider Hitler's offer of another pact because there was no assurance that it would be kept. Some of the French Ministers urged a partial mobilization of the army.

The apparently friendly references to Great Britain in Hitler's speech were designed to get Great Britain's support for this precipitate action in breaking the Locarno Treaty.

Hitler's argument that it was the Franco-Russian Pact that had induced him to march into the Rhineland was weak. Not only was the Locarno Pact signed spontaneously by Germany, and had actually been suggested by her first, but Hitler in his speech to the Reichstag in May, 1935, when he reasserted the Pact, knew that the agreement between France and Russia had already been signed. What is more he was acquainted with the terms.

While Germany was weak it was worth while for her to stand by the Locarno Treaty. But, at the beginning of 1936 she was becoming stronger, and could afford to show her mailed fist. It was exactly the same principle the former German Government had adopted at the Armistice.

The offer to join the League of Nations again was merely an attempt to sweeten the pill that she had forced the Allies to swallow in occupying the Rhineland. The offer could not be taken seriously for, until recently, the Germans had ridiculed the League.

But what interested Britain and France more than anything else was the reference to colonies. This question it was thought, would cause the next crisis. But colonies could only be a demand, and not an occupation, for Hitler was not in a position to occupy them.

It was a week of crisis following Hitler's coup, Britain promptly declared that she would help France in the event of her being attacked by Germany. Hitler, on the other hand, promptly repudiated other clauses of the Versailles Treaty relating to the rivers Rhine, Danube, Oder, and Moselle. They had been internationalized by the Treaty; Hitler nationalized them.

France asked for sanctions against Germany through the League of Nations when it was said that there were 90,000 German troops in the Rhineland. Germany declared that there were only 20,000—merely a symbolic occupation.

Appeals were made to Hitler to attend meetings of the

League Council. Germany presented her case, and the League eventually condemned her for breaking the Peace Treaty.

Certain plans were suggested by the Locarno Powers:

1. To submit the dispute over the Franco-Soviet Pact to The Hague Court.
2. Maintain Rhine forces at 35,000.
3. To accept an international force composed of British and Italian troops in a neutral zone twelve miles deep from the Franco-Belgian frontier during the Court proceedings.
4. World co-operation on disarmament and economic relations.

Hitler would not agree to the neutral zone.

For several months the discussions concerning a new Locarno Pact went on. Finally Germany's sum-total towards such a Pact was a request to Britain and France that they would be neutral in any move Hitler contemplated in the East. This destroyed any hope of a new Western Pact to replace the old treaty torn up by Germany. It meant that the Franco-Soviet Pact, France's alliances with Poland and Czechoslovakia, would become inoperative. It meant, too, that the Western Powers would be forced to remain aloof while Germany settled differences with her Eastern neighbours.

In addition Hitler wanted the Pact so worded that none of the signatories would in any circumstances move against another. In the event of such a contingency occurring the threatened party was to have immediate assistance from the remaining signatories.

The complication arising from such a Pact would be catastrophic. France would not have the right to move against Germany in support of her Eastern allies. She might also find Britain and Italy against her if she decided to tackle Germany across the Rhineland.

It was a cute proposal on the part of Hitler, but the Allies were not foolish enough to give it a second thought.

Meanwhile the question of non-interference in the Spanish Civil War had arisen. On August 27th Germany adhered to the Non-intervention Agreement. Within three days German planes arrived at Cadiz, to be followed by many more.

Hitler, in a characteristic outburst on the Spanish Civil War, swore that General Franco would never be beaten if Germany could help it.

This systematic breaking of undertakings by Germany exhausted the patience of the Allies. In the late autumn it was freely prophesied that there would be war in the following year. Rumours were rife that Hitler was massing troops in Spain, ready for an invasion of France. France and Russia protested against this intervention policy—Russia without sincerity, for she was sending planes to Spain herself, and would have sent troops if she could have got them there.

There were reports from Berlin of disagreement among the Nazi leaders, and of the parlous plight of Germany's finances. It was even predicted that the Fuehrer would fall in a fortnight, and that Field-Marshal von Blomberg would form a dictatorship. There were comings and goings at Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden.

But it was all wishful thinking. Hitler's next move was to send nine warships to Bilbao. In diplomatic circles there were hints of a repetition of the Agadir incident of 1911 when Germany sent the gunboat *Panther* to that port, promising the Moroccan kaid's Germany's support against the French.

The Spanish Government had seized a German ship loaded with war material. France and Britain began to put pressure upon the Spanish Republican Government to release the German vessel. All this indicated that Britain and France were deadily afraid of a show-down with Germany. At the same time it was proof that Hitler's new technique

of "nerves" was proving successful, even more successful than he had hoped.

Stories came from Berlin that it was the intention to send five divisions of the Reichwehr to Spain, and that there were already 35,000 German troops in that unhappy country. Another rumour had it that Germany intended to push a division of troops across the Dutch frontier. New barracks, it was said, were being built to accommodate the new armies concentrated on the Belgian frontier. In the Rhineland, recently occupied by Germany, orders were given calling up all postmen, railwaymen and school teachers for civilian manoeuvres, while barracks were hastily built for 200,000 Hitler youth and Labour Corps men.

But all these signs of impending war were grossly exaggerated. Goebbels' Propaganda Department were keeping nations on the jump. It was all a part of Hitler's war of "nerves."

At the same time Hermann Goering, who was beginning to get about as a sort of second-line Fuehrer, was making speeches about colonies, joking about guns replacing butter and talking of Germany's coming place in the sun.

Yes, things were going nicely, and strictly in accord with the Nazi plan already prepared for the next crisis.

The frequent talks about colonies were designed to keep Britain guessing. It was obvious to any student of international politics that Germany was not yet overwhelmingly strong enough to demand the colonies back.

"Now, more than ever," shouted Goering in the Berlin Sportpalast to 15,000 Berliners, "we must really set to work. Germany has not yet gained her place in the sun. We have no colonies. After an unfortunate war they were stolen from us. We are told, 'If you want raw materials, you must buy them with gold.' But the gold has been stolen, too. It sounds like mockery to speak to us in that way. First Germany is overpowered, then robbed and bled for reparations, and then

come the chosen people and plunder Germany with inflation.

"And then we are told, 'What do you want with colonies? Pay with your gold!'

"We must help ourselves. Never again must a foreign hand take us by the throat. We will break off the fingers of this hand one by one during the next few years. We want to have a share in the world's raw materials, and we will have a share."

Goering had just launched his four-year-plan for making Germany self-sufficient. It was essential to put out the right propaganda. In telling the people they would have to tighten their belts, Goering craftily blamed other nations who, he said, were trying to strangle the Fatherland. He would be only too glad to tighten his own belt. "I have been eating less fat myself," he declared, "and have lost over a stone and a half. Our Leader is building up a strong nation. If we eat too much we shall get too fat. I always remember our Leader eats no butter, and no meat. What he can do, we can do."

Of course, those patriotic, but thick-headed Berliners did not know that Goering was receiving secret supplies of butter from Britain, or that he was already piling up a considerable fortune like most of the Nazi leaders. But no doubt they speculated on the recent weight of Hermann Goering if he had succeeded in reducing his huge frame by one and a half stone.

Talking was the chief occupation of Adolf Hitler during 1937. On the fourth anniversary of his accession to power he told the Reichstag members: "Peace is our dearest treasure."

And once more he repeated the string of solemn assurances previously given. All his statements on this occasion have significant relations to subsequent events, and stamp Adolf Hitler as the most fluent liar, and the nearest approach

to a Machiavelli than any other previous German statesman, and that is saying a great deal.

Here are some of his declarations on the fourth anniversary of his elevation to the Chancellorship.

"The demand for colonies will ever and again be raised for our so densely populated country. . . ."

"Germany, and I solemnly repeat this here, has declared time and time again that there can be no humanly conceivable object of dispute whatsoever between Germany and France."

"I should like to assure Mr. Eden that we Germans do not in the least want to be isolated. By a number of agreements we have removed former tensions, and this has contributed essentially to an improvement of European relations."

"I solemnly withdraw above all, the German signature from that declaration which was enforced from a weak Government against its better judgment that Germany was responsible for the war."

"The blood and race doctrine of the National-Socialist movement will prevent the Jewish people from trying to disintegrate and dominate other people under the mark of a bourgeoisie."

"We shall oppose Bolshevism with every means at our command."

Ever since the abortive Munich *putsch* Hitler and Ludendorff had not been friendly. At the beginning of 1937 Hitler felt the need of military advice. He called to see the old general. But that strange person had become in the years still stranger. He was now running a campaign against the Catholics, insisting that they were in league with the Bolsheviks of Russia. He laid down three conditions for co-operating in the Government—(1) Strong propaganda against the Catholics, (2) Withdraw from Spain and show a less cordial attitude to Italy, and (3) Give up the idea of trying to get back Memel and the occupation of Czecho-

slovakia, and return to the policy of total preparation for war.

Hitler accepted the conditions at first, but on pressure from his advisers he told Ludendorff that Italy would be wanted as an ally in a future war.

Ludendorff expressed contempt for Mussolini and his army. "The Italians will run away with their tails between their legs at the first sign of the enemy," he declared.

But it was already clear that by now Ludendorff was weak-minded. He was running a new religion based on the cult of the old German pagan gods, was raving against Christianity, Jewry, Freemasonry, and anything that was opposed to the worship of German mythological heroes.

And so we bid good-bye to Eric von Ludendorff, whose was never probably a well-balanced mind.

By this time, like Goering and the other Nazi leaders, Hitler was doing well personally. He had pocketed half a million pounds from the sale of *Mein Kampf*. It had appeared in eight languages, suitably sub-edited for consumption in each separate country. It was one of the biggest rackets since the South Sea Bubble.

In the original edition France was threatened with annihilation. In this, too, Hitler drew up the original programme of the National-Socialist Party. All through it runs his antipathy to Judaism and Bolshevism, and his insistence upon equality for Germany in Europe.

Later he withdrew the threat against France, and pleaded that he had been provoked into the threat by France's use of black troops in the Rhineland. I suppose one cannot expect Hitler to be very friendly with France, inasmuch as his abortive Munich *putsch* which landed him in a Bavarian fortress was attempted to counter the French invasion of the Ruhr.

The Nazi bible was presented to school prizewinners, soldiers entering the service, and to every newly-married

couple. One cannot help wondering what help to connubial bliss they found in this record of the wanderings of the mind of a fanatic.

By February, 1937, Hitler had issued the 231st edition. It was said at the time that Hitler had no salary from the State and that the whole of his income was derived from the sale of *Mein Kampf*. Maybe there was truth in this. But as his income from the book was many thousands a year, he could afford to look with disdain at a salary. But since then it has been proved that he has received a salary from the Reich. On the other hand, the royalties from *Mein Kampf* were sufficient to enable him to build his famous chalet at Berchtesgaden.

The first volume is said to have been dictated by Hitler to Rudolf Hess, his deputy. Other volumes have since followed, revised to suit prevailing conditions.

Towards the end of 1937 it became necessary to reinforce the S.S. or Black Guards, as well as the Secret Police (Gestapo). There had been numerous attempts on Hitler's life, and a number of secret societies had sprung up with the object of the overthrow of the Nazi regime.

Extraordinary care was made in selecting men for the Black Guards. Herr Himmler was in charge of both organizations, but in connection with the S.S. he laid down strict rules of abstinence, and took severe measures to prevent excessive drinking among the men.

He began by demanding a minimum height of 5ft. 7 in. and a definite physical type. Basing his arguments on the usual Nordic nonsense he declared that the size of the "Nordic" was 5ft. 7in. and upwards. People below that height had little Nordic blood. S.S. men intending to get married were called upon to produce a lineage going back to 1780—S.S. officers to 1750.

The bride of the S.S. man had also to produce evidence as to her previous life, particularly whether she was domestic

and loved children, whether she drank or smoked, and to what extent.

In 1933 when a special racial commission was set up, there were 200,000 S.S. men, of whom 90,000 were previously married. Drastic penalties were imposed against excessive drinking. As head of the Gestapo and the S.S. Himmler declared that he had obtained considerable insight into the problem of alcohol drinking. The number of people who went to pieces through this habit was terribly high, he added.

S.S. men who had taken their word of honour that they would abstain from drinking, and failed afterwards to keep their promise, were given the option of shooting themselves. A man who could not give his word of honour was dismissed from the corps.

Goering was the originator of the Gestapo, or German Secret State Police. He had conceived it as a reinforcement of his own bodyguard.

It was begun in Prussia and later extended to the provinces. The Gestapo soon had branches all over the world. From this organization came Germany's spy activities.

Austria

Although the primary object of the Nazi Party was to secure complete control in Germany, the question of the Nazification of Austria was not overlooked, even in the very early stages of the campaign.

Austria, indeed, was to be incorporated sooner or later into the German Reich. The numerous declarations by Hitler that he had no intention of using force against Austria to achieve an Anschluss can be regarded as proof that he was determined upon that very course.

Thus the penetration into Austria was begun as early as possible. Few people outside the Central European nations realized to what extent the scheme had progressed in that country. This, however, was demonstrated soon after the Purge, when Austrian Nazis engineered a plot with the object of bringing down the Government in Vienna.

In March, 1933, Engelbert Dollfuss secured the Chancellorship of Austria and maintained what was virtually a dictatorship. He dismissed the Austrian Parliament, in which his party had only a narrow majority, and announced his intention of revising the Constitution, so that Parliament could deal more rapidly and effectively "with certain matters that urgently needed attention."

Behind this bald statement of policy there was a threat to his political opponents. Dollfuss intended to stand no non-

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sense. And, although he was not bent upon ruling a totalitarian Austria in the way that Mussolini ruled Italy and Hitler ruled Germany, the situation in Austria was such that he required a free hand to put matters right.

Dollfuss was soon faced with opposition from two quarters, the Socialists and the Nazis. The Austrian National-Socialists, backed by the Hitler gang in Germany, made several attempts at insurrection. The courageous midget Chancellor—he was less than five feet in height—let it be known that he would prevent an Anschluss with all the power he possessed. Whereupon the Germans proceeded to intensify their efforts to obtain his downfall.

The little man acted promptly. The frontier was closed to German Nazis. He suppressed their newspapers, prohibited meetings and gave Herr Habicht, the Nazi Press officer notice to quit.

The Germans retaliated by banning tourists into Austria. Dollfuss closed the frontier to German imports.

In September, 1933, Dollfuss reconstructed the Austrian Cabinet, took over the army and police force with the object of turning Austria into a corporate State. At the same time he dismissed Prince Starhemberg, the leader of the semi-Fascist Heimwehr, and declared that he would rule the country with the assistance of, and not under, the army.

An attempt was made to assassinate Dollfuss on October 3rd. He was wounded in the arm by a shot fired by a young student who eventually received a term of imprisonment.

At length in July, 1934, a month after the Purge in Germany, Austrian Nazis tried to seize the Government by a *coup d'état*.

Young insurgents, dressed in uniforms of police and soldiers went in lorries about midday to the Federal Chancery on the Ballhausplatz, forced their way into the courtyard, closed the outer door and took prisoners Chancellor Dollfuss,

FROM VERSAILLES TO DANZIG

Major Fey, the State Commissioner-General for Extraordinary Measures of Security, and Herr Karwinsky, the Under Secretary for Public Security.

Another gang broke into the headquarters of the Austrian Broadcasting Company in the Inner City. The officials were held up at the point of revolvers while one of the Nazis went to a microphone and broadcast the lying information that Herr Dollfuss had resigned in favour of Herr Rintelin, the Austrian Minister at Rome, who was then in Vienna.

A fight developed in the broadcasting building. Machine-guns and revolvers spat lead. The fray lasted for about half an hour. Eventually the broadcasting station was cleared of insurgents.

Meanwhile police and auxiliaries had surrounded the Chancellery. They delivered an ultimatum, calling upon the rebels to surrender by four o'clock, or they would be bombed out.

At about 4.30 Major Fey appeared at a window of the Chancellery and stated that Dollfuss was seriously injured, and that, to save further trouble, he had resigned.

The somewhat dubious admission gave the impression that the Government had surrendered to the Nazis, particularly when the additional information was vouchsafed that Herr Rintelin would negotiate with the insurgents.

For an hour, however, Government forces and Nazis continued to fire at each other. Then the hopes of the Government supporters rose. Major Fey appeared again at the window and ordered the loyal troops to cease fire. "We shall be coming down in a moment," he added.

Simultaneously Herr Neustadter-Stuermer, Heimwehr Minister for Social Welfare, harangued the insurrectionaries. "In the name of the Government I guarantee you liberty to withdraw, and a free passage over the frontier. I will give you twenty minutes to think it over. If you do not accept our offer in that time, the Chancellery will be stormed."

The Heimwehr auxiliaries raised a delighted shout of "Heil, Fey!" And, hurling threats at the Nazis, they cried, "If you do any harm to our Fey we will hang every one of you on the nearest trees."

Armoured cars were then brought up and placed into position ready for an assault on the Chancellery.

The twenty minutes expired as the clocks in Vienna struck six.

Again Major Fey was seen at the window. On each side of him was a rebel leader. To Neustadter-Stuermer he warned, "No action yet."

"Is that so," replied the Social Welfare Minister, sarcastically. "Then we are going to storm the building."

"What," exclaimed one of the ringleaders, "you have no orders to do so!"

"I am still the Minister responsible for public order," retorted Major Fey.

"That is not so," replied the Social Welfare Minister. "I would have you understand that the President of the Republic has declared that he will recognize no Government action taken under pressure. He has appointed Herr Schuschnigg, the Minister of Education, acting head of the Government. If the rebels do not surrender in fifteen minutes, I will storm the building."

Whereupon the Heimwehr troops shouted their approval.

The Nazis gave in.

Dollfuss, who had apparently been wounded earlier in the afternoon had died.

About midnight the story of his murder was told to an indignant populace on the radio.

Advised by his personal servants to retire out of the strife that was going on, the Chancellor was on his way to the rooms of President Miklas when Nazis broke into a room and found him.

A bullet struck him in the neck, and a second in the

shoulder. He was entirely unarmed. He called for help weakly and then slumped to the floor and lay still.

His servant who had accompanied him, was told to stand against the wall and remain there. Later the servant was taken to Major Fey, the Chancellor being left alone with his assailants.

The end of the courageous little man was pathetic. When Major Fey was taken to him, he lay upon a sofa breathing his last. A towel was wrapped round his head, and a rough bandage was on his neck.

"To you, Major," he whispered, "I commend my wife and children. Then he added still more weakly, "There must not be any bloodshed on my account."

Whereupon Major Fey was abruptly led away by the rebels with a revolver pressed into his ribs. Again Dollfuss was alone with his murderers.

This Nazi revolt was well organized, but premature. The Austrian Government tried to make the world understand that it was directed solely towards the Chancellery, that is Dollfuss. But there is not the shadow of doubt that it was the intention of the insurgents to seize the Government entirely.

The technique was similar to that which Hitler himself had adopted in Germany.

While the Austrian people were being apprised of what had occurred in Vienna, the little Chancellor lay in his room at the Chancellery, covered with a white cloth, guarded by four soldiers of the Austrian Federal Army.

The problem was how to deal with the insurgents. All those in Vienna were temporarily interned in the central police barracks. They did not remain there long. Efforts were made by the German Minister to get them across the border into Germany. It was said at first that Germany was unwilling to have them. However, all ultimately found their way over the frontier, to return four years later well trained, well armed when the German army invaded Austria.

It has been suggested that the murder of Dollfuss was

not altogether due to political motives. It is indeed possible that the murders of Ernst Roehm, Baron von Schleicher and Chancellor Dollfuss were intimately connected, that is to say, there was an ulterior motive behind each assassination.

There is a great mystery surrounding Hitler. It is the mystery of his parentage and birth.

Who is Hitler?

Why was he so vicious against the country of his birth, Austria?

The refusal by Austria to accept him for military service, as is alleged, cannot be the sole reason for his contempt of that country.

Much light—if it can be described as such—has been brought to bear upon the origin of Adolf Hitler. It is said that first General von Schleicher, then Dollfuss and finally Herr von Schuschnigg were in possession of certain information concerning the Fuehrer of Germany. Each had in his possession documents that disclosed secrets that Hitler was anxious to conceal.

General von Schleicher's papers are said to prove that Hitler never earned the Iron Cross 1st Class which he wore. We have already noted that there was no entry in the records of his regiment to the effect that the award was given to him. In any case, the Iron Cross 1st Class was in the nature of the British Victoria Cross and was granted under only exceptional circumstances, and was given personally by the Emperor. There is, it seems, no evidence of any such investiture.

It is even declared that Hitler was never in the front line trenches during the Great War. The assertion is that the honour was given to him by Ludendorff after the war, and that Hitler was engaged in some occupation behind the lines during the whole of his war service.

It was these facts, it is said, that were given in the documents in the possession of von Schleicher.

The papers which Dollfuss possessed, and which afterwards came into the possession of von Schuschnigg, presumably as Austrian State-owned documents, were, however, of a different character. They contained the story of Hitler's origin which Dollfuss himself had pieced together.

Adolf Hitler's grandmother was named Mathild Schueckelgruber or Schickelgruber. The difference in the spelling is not important. The second is more an English rendering.

Mathild gave birth to an illegitimate son and named him Alois. This son entered the Civil Service and married Anna Glaser-Hoyer. The latter died and Alois married a second time Franciska Malzalberger. A son of this marriage became a waiter. A second child of the marriage was a girl named Angela.

Franciska died and Alois married a third time, a young woman named Clara Poltzi, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. By this time Alois was well on in years, and Clara's father objected to the union. At length he gave permission for the ceremony to take place.

But, alas! when the farmer saw the birth certificate of Alois, he was horrified to find that he was a "love child."

This was more than the farmer could stand. Alois, however, was equal to the problem. He suggested that if he changed his name it would make it extremely difficult for his parentage to be traced. Old Poltzi finally agreed to this course, and the necessary formalities for changing the surname to Hitler were gone through. Hitler was the maiden name of the farmer's wife. It was not a common name in Austria except among the Jews.

Thus, having changed his name. Alois achieved his desire of marrying Clara.

It is nothing against Hitler that his father was an illegitimate son. It would still be no stigma if the identity of his grandfather were known. But it is suggested that it is the identity of that grandfather that Hitler wishes to remain

secret. It was the documents in the possession of Dollfuss that disclosed the secret.

Maybe those documents were forgeries, but if they were Hitler went to great lengths to secure them, as he ultimately did, through the medium of the Gestapo.

Why, then, was Hitler so anxious to obtain the papers? While they were in the possession of the Austrian Government they were the barrier to an Anschluss that he had long contemplated.

For years his secret agents, the Gestapo, had tried to filch them from the possession of Dollfuss and afterwards from his successor von Schuschnigg. It is probable that attempts were made to find them at the time of the murder of Dollfuss. That they were unsuccessful is shown by the fact that they were in von Schuschnigg's safe at the beginning of 1938.

It is assumed that if Hitler had begun to put pressure on the Austrian Government, the contents of the papers would have been made public, and Hitler would have been discredited in the eyes of the world, and his chance of winning over Austria to the Nazi "ideology" would have failed.

Who was Hitler's grandfather?

The suggestion is that little Mathild Schueckelgruber was employed in the house of a famous Austrian Jewish family when she had to return home to her parents because she was *enceinte*.

It is easy to draw an inference from this. At the same time the documents may have been forged. If they were spurious it is strange that Hitler should have taken such pains to secure them. A photograph copy of the original is said to have been sent to England at the time of von Schuschnigg's downfall.

If the story of little Mathild is true it might explain Hitler's persecution of the Jews. It would also bring Hitler down from his pedestal.

It is a part of the Nazi scheme of things that the Leader

shall be a hero. If the story of the acquisition of the Iron Cross could be proved to have been a bogus award, it would do still more to discredit Hitler.

That the Nazis deliberately fake stories of this kind is well known. There is, for instance, considerable mystery surrounding Horst Wessel, the author of the so-called Horst Wessel Song, whom the Nazis have made into a Nordic hero.

This young man is said to have been assassinated by the Communists in 1930. But there is much doubt, however, as to the circumstances of his death. It is said that Horst Wessel was not a martyr to the Nazi cause, but the victim of a private vendetta.

Wessel was one of the Nazi leaders who carried on propaganda in a somewhat disreputable part of Berlin. He lived with a widow and her daughter. The daughter had been a Communist, but was spirited away from the party by Wessel. It is doubtful if her character was quite what it should have been.

One day, a young man, believed to have been a previous lover of the girl, rushed into the kitchen of the house where the family lived and killed Wessel.

Wessel had written a large number of lyrics. One of them was given an old folk tune, and turned into a marching song by the Nazis.

Wessel was duly placed in the Nazi "calendar" as a "saint."

We come now to the events of the early part of 1938.

At that time the eyes of Europe were once more on Austria.

It had always been the plan of the National-Socialist Party to incorporate Austria in a greater German Reich. Since the murder of Dollfuss, the Austrian Government, Fascist in its operation, had frustrated Nazi attempts to seize the reins.

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Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg, the Chancellor, battled bravely against the demands of the Hitler gang. But the technique which afterwards became so familiar, was employed to bring Austria into the Nazi fold.

In 1934 Dollfuss had begun to rule what was in effect a Catholic-Fascist Austria. He had suppressed Parliament and the powerful working-class movement. It is a matter of opinion whether this measure was to the benefit of the country. Democrats, of course, did not approve of it. At the same time it was a Government that refused to be coerced by revolutionary elements, such as Communists and Nazis.

But the Nazis gradually became powerful, and demanded representation in all administrative bodies from Parish Councils to Provincial Governments.

Dr. von Schuschnigg, compelled to concede many of the Nazi demands, gave the same rights of representation to the Socialists. Thus it was that Austria was gradually returning to a democracy.

That, however, did not suit the Nazis. At the beginning of March, 1938, Schuschnigg was faced by a demand from Hitler for greater representation for his party, and the appointment of Nazis in the Government.

Von Schuschnigg was stubborn. Hitler invited him to his eyrie at Berchtesgaden to talk it over. Various versions of that interview have been published. It is said that Hitler acted like a madman, threatened to march into Austria, and showed the Chancellor a plan of campaign that had already been prepared for the purpose.

It is also said that the Fuehrer showed von Schuschnigg the secret dossier which the Chancellor believed to be safe in the Chancellery at Vienna. The Gestapo, with the aid of von Papen, had managed to obtain the papers only a few days before.

Whether this is true or not, von Schuschnigg left Berchtesgaden in a subdued frame of mind. But, on reaching

Austria, he decided to test the feeling of the people of his country by a plebiscite. This was fixed for Sunday, March 13th, but on the previous Friday he was presented with a German ultimatum demanding a postponement of the plebiscite, which would, without doubt, have provided a substantial majority for the Government.

There had been no question as to the proper conduct of the plebiscite. The arrangements that had been made ensured that there would be no intimidation, and if the Nazis had a majority in the country, the poll would have disclosed the fact.

To keep order during the voting the Government called out the reservists of the year 1915. Nazis demonstrated all over the country, prepared to terrorize people into voting for them if the plebiscite were held.

Under pressure from Hitler, Dr. von Schuschnigg abandoned the plebiscite, but Herr Miklas, the Austrian president, refused to nominate the Nazi leader, Dr. von Seyss-Inquart, as Chancellor in place of von Schuschnigg.

Friday, March 11th, was a day of tension. German troops were already on the march at the time the ultimatum was delivered. Schuschnigg had agreed to a postponement of the plebiscite on condition that the Nazis refrained from causing disorder in Austria. Hitler replied demanding the Chancellor's resignation in favour of Seyss-Inquart.

Reports of a mobilization of German troops came first from Munich.

Berlin's War Ministry declared: "There is no mobilization afoot or any troop movements in connection with the situation in Austria."

The Propaganda Ministry, however, admitted that certain movements of troops "of an inconsiderable nature" were taking place in Bavaria with a view to strengthening the frontier, and for the maintenance of order in case of disturbances over the week-end.

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But there was no doubt that able-bodied men were being called up, that lorries and municipal buses were being commandeered.

At the same time the Germans put out the canard that Czechoslovakians were moving into Austria to help the Anti-Anschluss Party, and that France was helping the Austrian "Bolshevists."

The Germans closed their frontiers to foreigners for ninety minutes. As the day advanced there was confirmation of the troop movements. At length Berlin admitted the mobilization.

The first trouble flared up at Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol. Here hundreds of police armed with bayonets and sabres fought with a force of 15,000 Nazi demonstrators, many of them in the full uniform of Storm Troops. The Nazis broke the police cordons, and to prevent their marching into the centre of the town, barbed-wire barricades were erected. Inside the town hall machine guns were ready for any emergency.

Nazis cut the wire and removed the barricades, and then descended upon the city from all sides. Finally the police were overwhelmed.

In Vienna serious disorders broke out. Three Catholic students were the first victims. They were wounded in a clash between Nazi and Catholic students.

German troops crossed the Austrian frontier at ten o'clock that night.

The demands that Hitler made to von Schuschnigg were that the plebiscite should be postponed, that two-thirds of the seats in the Cabinet should be handed over to Nazis, that the National-Socialist Party should be given full liberty in Austria, and that the Austrian Legionaries who had left the country at the time of the murder of Dollfuss, should return to keep order in Vienna.

This was tantamount to a complete capitulation.

It was obvious to von Schuschnigg early in the afternoon of Friday that Austria was doomed. At seven o'clock he broadcast to the Austrian people in a voice full of emotion. He denied the reports that there had been workers' disturbances in Vienna, that blood had flowed, and that his Government could not maintain order. He wished to declare to the world that the Germans had issued a tissue of lies.

President Miklas, he continued, had charged him to tell the Austrian people that the Government had yielded to force, and that the Austrian troops, in the event of a German march, would retire.

He concluded by saying: "Thus I take my leave from the Austrian people in this hour with a German word and a wish from my heart—'God save Austria.'"

Dr. von Seyss-Inquart then took over the wireless and told the people that German troops were on their way.

At the moment that the invaders crossed the frontier the Austrian Government ceased to function.

At 10.45 Herr Hess, Hitler's deputy, arrived in Vienna. At midnight the capital was completely Nazi.

Trains leaving Vienna were packed with Austrians and foreigners. In the streets there was an incessant shout of "Heil Hitler!" and "One people one Reich."

The inhabitants of Vienna, completely helpless at this sudden change in their fortunes, huddled round their home fires in an atmosphere of gloom.

"No resistance must be offered to the approaching German army!" declared Dr. von Seyss-Inquart, threateningly.

"Independent Austria"—that had been the slogan during the five years' resistance to the Nazi penetration—was no longer independent.

Yet Hitler had reiterated again and again that he had no designs on Austria.

At eight o'clock on Sunday, March 12th, the incorporation of Austria as part of Germany was officially decreed. It was

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also announced that President Miklas had resigned and that there would not be another appointment to the office of President.

Throughout the week-end German troops continued their march into Austria, accompanied by mechanized units with planes flying overhead.

The Austrian army of 37,000 men and the Air Force were incorporated into the German army. Austria had become a province of Germany with the status of Bavaria and other provinces. Dr. von Schuschnigg was placed under guard. He was destined to become a prisoner during the Fuehrer's pleasure, or until death released him.

"I congratulate you on the way you have solved the Austrian problem," telegraphed Benito Mussolini to Hitler. "I had already warned Schuschnigg."

"I shall never forget this," replied Hitler to Mussolini.

Comment on this back-scratching is superfluous in the light of subsequent events.

Refugees swarmed across the Austrian frontier. Police who had all along been secret members of the Black Guards helped Storm Troopers to scrutinize the credentials of the fugitives. Many of those seeking to escape were detained.

Surrounding countries closed their frontiers to the huge flood of refugees. Hungary refused to allow anyone but their own nationals into the country. Rumania went farther still and would not allow Rumanians to enter from Austria.

Frau Dollfuss, the widow of the former Chancellor, reached Czechoslovakia with her son. Many of the members of the Austrian Government vanished. The relics of the Habsburg Monarchy, ex-Empress Zita and others crossed into Hungary.

Those members of Dr. von Schuschnigg's Cabinet who were not lucky enough to escape were arrested, as were leaders of trades unions.

The net was cast widely. The Nazis hauled in prominent

monarchists, Roman Catholics and members of the Fatherland Front, Socialists and Communists. It was a purge similar to that in Germany in 1934.

Newspapers were confiscated and suppressed.

Meanwhile planes droned overhead. The "friendly visit" as the Nazi organs called it, of the German troops was complete when Hitler himself crossed the frontier on the Munich-Salzburg road by car, and was welcomed by frantic crowds. At Salzburg flowers were thrown into his car.

Hitler visited his birthplace at Braunau. According to the Nazi Propaganda Department he was deeply moved. "At last I am allowed to return to Austria!" he is reported to have said.

Late in the afternoon of Sunday, Dr. von Seyss-Inquart announced that Section 80 of the Versailles Treaty, guaranteeing the independence of Austria, was a dead letter.

Would the signatories of the Versailles Treaty take action? There were some who thought they might. Most people, however, knew instinctively that Hitler would get away with it again.

Considerable anxiety was expressed in Czechoslovakia. This was appeased only when Hitler made it known in Prague that Germany had no hostile intentions against that country. This assurance was given again in a speech by Goering in Berlin.

"We will not interfere in the affairs of a third country," he declared.

But that statement was qualified by another. Germany, said Goering, had a claim to a protectorate over Germans abroad.

Yet Czechoslovakia was not taking things for granted. "The whole of the Czechoslovak army is ready at any moment to defend the unity of the State," said General Krazci at a military demonstration.

Of course the Allies registered a protest in Berlin. The

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Germans had achieved the Anschluss by coercion backed by force. "Such action," said Sir Neville Henderson, British Minister in Berlin, "is bound to produce the gravest reactions, of which it is impossible to foretell the issue."

It had been made perfectly clear to Germany that an occupation of Austria would have a serious effect on Anglo-German relations. There had been hopes that Hitler would allow the plebiscite to take place. But while he was keeping the Western nations talking, he was preparing for the coup.

It was the old technique of systematic lying and subterfuge, and it worked as easily as it had worked before.

The Jews? What was their contribution to the Anschluss?

The lengthening roll of suicides day by day provides the answer.

"If you do harm to our Fey, we will hang every one of you on the nearest trees," the Heimwehr had stoutly declared in the days of Chancellor Dollfuss. This time the Heimwehr had no say in the matter.

They found Major Emil Fey, ex-Vice Chancellor of Austria and ex-President of the Danube Steam Navigation Company, dead in his flat. Near him lay the body of his son Herbert, aged 19, close at hand his favourite dog, stiff in death. In another room Frau Fey was lifeless. All had been shot through the head with a pistol. That pistol lay close to the body of Fey.

Jewish business pulled down its shutters. The word "Jude" in blood red appeared on them. So-called Aryans hastened to put up a Swastika, with the device "Jewish customers not desired."

Storm Troopers made a round of visits. They found many Jews had made hasty departures, taking with them their jewellery and valuables. Which, of course, was annoying. They were well on their way to somewhere. Few were destined to get far.

Those who were caught provided sport for the Storm

Troopers. Bent, bearded, gentle patriarchs were forced into the streets with sandwich boards and compelled to parade up and down with the words "I am a Jew!"

It was terribly symbolic of Jewry through the ages.

Jews were dismissed from posts that brought them into touch with non-Jews. There must be no contamination of the clean, wholesome Nordic mind. Theatres were quickly purged of Judaic influence. It was inconceivable, too, that Jews should be allowed to work on the Press. The Press was going to be the voice of National-Socialism. Even athletic organizations must be purified.

A long list of "undesirable characters" was brought to Berlin where it had been pigeonholed against "The Day." Most of the "undesirable characters" took the quickest way out. Among the distinguished suicides were Herr Friedrich Rettlinger, president of the Tirolese industrial combine, and Professor Gustav Bayer of the University of Innsbruck. The latter had first poisoned his daughter, then himself.

Chapter 13

Munich Again

One would have thought that Hitler could never work the same trick again. But he did, and with as much facility as before, though it resulted in the biggest crisis of all, except that which ultimately brought a declaration of war from Britain and France.

Continuing his pre-arranged plan, despite Goering's "word of honour" to the Prague Government, Hitler proceeded to browbeat Czechoslovakia.

Hitler was actually in Austria when the campaign began on March 13th, 1938.

It is well known that Czechoslovakia was established as an independent State in October 1918. It incorporated six different races, comprising 7,000,000 Czechs, 2,500,000 Slovaks, 3,500,000 Germans, 750,000 Hungarians, 500,000 Ruthenians and 100,000 Poles.

For years the Germans in Sudetenland, the territory which surrounded Bohemia on both the German and Austrian sides, had been pressing the Prague Government for national concessions. On March 13th Konrad Henlein, the German leader in the Sudetenland, became more menacing.

He employed the same methods as Seyss-Inquart had done in Austria.

Earlier in the year the Czechoslovak Government had begun negotiations for the solution of the minorities problem.

Henlein, too, had visited England, and had heard the British Government's views on the Sudeten German question. On that visit, and previous ones, Henlein had pretended to be an apostle of conciliation, and had emphasized his anxiety to obtain a peaceful settlement with the Government of Prague.

That, however, was another specimen of German subterfuge. The Western nations had not moved to the help of Austria. It seemed to Henlein fairly certain that they would not interfere in Sudetenland.

On March 14th, three days after Germany annexed Austria, Mr. Neville Chamberlain assured the British House of Commons that Germany had promised to refrain from hostile acts against Czechoslovakia. Thus the Western countries were lulled into an apathetic attitude.

In September the storm broke.

On the 2nd Henlein conferred with Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and Herr von Ribbentrop, Nazi Foreign Secretary, at the Fuehrer's Alpine home. It was announced by the Sudeten Germans that Hitler and Henlein were in complete accord. In other words, Hitler had given Henlein the orders to carry on.

On September 4th Sudeten spokesmen demanded that all Czechs who had entered their territory since the Great War should be removed. On the following day the Czech Government made a new offer to the Sudetens which was said to represent the "final limit of concessions."

On the 15th Henlein issued the following proclamation: "My fellow-countrymen! As the bearer of your trust and aware of my responsibility, I declare before the entire world that the system of oppression by the Czech people has reached its height in the employment of machine-guns, armoured cars and tanks against Sudeten Germans.

"By these methods the Czech people have shown the whole world that co-operation with them in the same State has become finally impossible."

MUNICH AGAIN

Dealing with the "violence" of twenty years, Henlein concluded: "In this hour of Sudeten German misery I appear before you the German people, and the whole civilized world and declare: We want to live as free German human beings! We want to have peace and work once more in our homeland! We want to go home to the Reich! God bless us and our just struggle!"

This proclamation was broadcast from all German radio stations.

Meanwhile a steady stream of refugees—Czechs, Jews and German Social-Democrats left the disputed territory.

Czech troops were sent to the frontier. The Czechoslovak Parliament was dissolved. Martial Law was proclaimed in the Sudetenland.

Revolutionary acts by the Nazis were intensified. Yet not all the Germans were in support of Henlein. They put on white armlets to show they were not.

The Prague Government announced that it would take prompt action against those responsible for the proclamation. Whereupon Henlein, and his deputy Herr Franck, crossed the frontier into Germany.

The British Government, with the intention of offering an olive branch to Germany, had sent Lord Runciman to talk over the Sudetenland question with Hitler. Lord Runciman had returned having achieved nothing.

It seemed therefore that there would be war between Germany and Czechoslovakia. The whole of Europe might well become involved.

Then came the astounding news that the British Premier was going to see Hitler. It was a gesture that took the fancy of the man in the street, both in Britain and in Germany. But nothing could have given Hitler so much secret satisfaction. The chief man of the British Empire was actually going cap in hand to plead with Hitler to hold back his cohorts.

The announcement that Mr. Chamberlain was going to Germany was made on the evening of September 14th, from 10, Downing Street. The official text was as follows:

"The Prime Minister has sent the German Fuehrer and Chancellor, through His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin, the following message:

" 'In view of increasingly critical situation, I propose to come over at once to see you with a view to trying to find a peaceful solution. I propose to come across by air, and am ready to start to-morrow. Please indicate earliest time at which you can see me and suggest place of meeting. Should be grateful for very early reply.—Neville Chamberlain.'

"The Fuehrer and Chancellor has replied to the above message to the effect that he will be very ready to meet the British Prime Minister on September 15th (to-morrow). The Prime Minister is accordingly leaving for Germany by air to-morrow morning."

This momentous announcement threw all other news in the shade. It meant that the Premier was going to make a great effort to finish the suspense that was getting on the nerves of all nations.

It was entirely unexpected, but events had moved so fast during the past few days that only a drastic move was likely to prevent war.

That the situation was dangerous in the extreme is shown by the hurried decision of Mr. Chamberlain. The move was received with intense relief throughout the country. No one understood the intended visit as a threat to Hitler.

At the same time there was considerable criticism of the visit in some quarters. It seemed too much like shaking hands with a Dictator. But reasonable people realized that after all democracies and dictatorships had to live side by side, and were thankful that something would be done to lift the anxiety.

Mr. Chamberlain left Heston early on the following

morning, the 15th, with Sir Horace Wilson and Mr. William Strang of the Foreign Office.

It was many years since Downing Street had been so full of journalists of all nations. On the night of the announcement, too, Downing Street was packed with people.

American newspapers hailed Mr. Chamberlain's decision. At the same time, they thought it a little undignified. But if Mr. Chamberlain were willing to sacrifice dignity for the peace of the world, it was to be done in a worthy cause.

Historians proceeded to turn over the pages of history to see if there were a precedent for such a visit by a British Prime Minister. No; nothing like it had ever occurred before. True, British Premiers had gone to talk peace abroad on many occasions, but always with a deciding voice in the negotiations.

This, however, was a little different. It seemed too much like a defeated man bowing his knee to a victor. But it was a comforting thought that if there were a spark of humanity in the breast of Adolf Hitler, Mr. Chamberlain would find it.

The jittery British, French and German publics were grateful. So grateful, indeed, were the Germans that they gave him an overwhelming reception, brought out British and German flags, and "Heiled!" him for all they were worth.

But when one considers the enthusiasm of the German people in the cold light of logic, it is obvious that they believed they were cheering a man who had come to give them what their Fuehrer demanded.

Mr. Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden with more confidence than Dr. von Schuschnigg had gone there a few months before. A lot has been said about that meeting which is probably not true. Rumour has it that Hitler was frantic in his demands for this and that. At the same time, Mr. Chamberlain returned to England hopeful to tell the British

public that a great deal had been achieved in the free and courteous discussions that had taken place.

And, Mr. Chamberlain added, he was going back again, Hitler having offered to meet him half-way at Godesberg to save an "old man" such a long journey to Berchtesgaden.

At those first meetings Hitler promised "that no action should be taken, particularly in the Sudeten territory, by the forces of the Reich to prejudice any further mediation which may be found possible."

Thus the British and French Governments were entitled to look upon the crisis as being considerably less dangerous.

Returning to Germany, Mr. Chamberlain fully expected that a settlement would be reached in an attitude of compromise. Pressure had meanwhile been brought to bear on the Czech Government to concede more than they had any intention of conceding at the outset.

Everything seemed rosy.

Yet, when Mr. Chamberlain got into touch with Hitler again he found that that backslider had increased his demands.

Pestered at his hotel to make a statement, Mr. Chamberlain said: "You cannot call this a complete breakdown."

Meanwhile the trouble between the Sudetens and the Czechs was intensified. Czech troops reoccupied towns and villages in Sudetenland that had been seized by Germans, leaving in the hands of the Nazis only those places which stuck into Germany. Many dead were reported. The Czech Maginot Line was manned.

The Czechs had learned that Hitler was recalcitrant. He wanted to occupy the Sudeten areas at once. Mr. Chamberlain pointed out to him in a letter that "the Czech Government would have no option but to order their forces to resist, and this would mean the destruction of the basis upon which you and I a week ago agreed to work together—namely, an orderly settlement of this question rather than a settlement by force."

Hitler replied that he must occupy Sudetenland, not only the part that had been originally in dispute but other parts as well.

Mr. Chamberlain, in despair, asked for Hitler's proposals so that he could lay them before the Czechoslovak Government.

The man was incorrigible. He had actually gone back on promises he had made only a week before.

Yet, by this time, one would have thought Hitler's policy would have been well known. He had never been known to alter the general course of his policy. Sometimes he had varied the speed of his machinery, but had never reversed it.

What was to be the next move?

A letter went from Mr. Chamberlain to Hitler with Sir Horace Wilson. In it the Prime Minister pointed out that Czechoslovakia had said that the German proposals went far beyond what was agreed to in the Anglo-French plan that had been submitted to them.

Czechoslovakia would be deprived of every safeguard for her national existence. . . .

Mr. Chamberlain suggested that representatives of the German Government should meet representatives of the Czechoslovak Government with a view to settling by agreement the way the territory was to be handed over. Britain was willing to arrange for the representation of the British Government at the discussions.

Herr Hitler replied that he could not understand the Czechoslovak Government's arguments. The immediate occupation of the disputed areas, he declared, would be no more than a security measure which was intended to guarantee a quick and smooth achievement of the final settlement. He could place no confidence in Czech assurances.

Definitely it was now a deadlock. The Czechs were mobilizing fast, more than a million men being under arms, and reservists being called up feverishly.

War between Germany and Czechoslovakia at least seemed certain. And the Czechs fully expected France to go to their assistance, and probably Russia, too, for both those countries had guaranteed her integrity.

War, however, was finally averted by the pressure put to bear on Czechoslovakia to concede Hitler's demands. Into the fray now stepped Benito Mussolini. To what extent he played the role of peacemaker is not clear. But new discussions were begun, and they ultimately led to that understanding, known as the Munich Pact, that was going to save the peace of Europe for "our time."

It was an agreement between Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy, and was signed at Munich on September 29th, 1938. These were its terms:

"Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy have agreed, taking into consideration the settlement already agreed upon in principle concerning the cession of the Sudeten German districts on the following conditions and procedure, and the measures to be taken, and declare themselves individually held responsible by this agreement for guaranteeing the steps necessary for its fulfilment:

"1. The evacuation begins on October 1st.
— "2. The United Kingdom, France and Italy agree that the evacuation of the region shall be completed by October 10th, without destruction of any of the existing institutions, and that the Czechoslovak Government bears the responsibility for seeing that the evacuation is carried out without damaging the aforesaid institutions.

"3. Conditions governing the evacuation will be laid down in detail by an international commission, composed of representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Czechoslovakia.

"4. The occupation by stages of the predominantly German territories by German troops will begin on October 1st."

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The agreement then went on to schedule certain districts that were to be evacuated on various days between October 1st and October 7th. The remaining territories, said to be predominantly German, were to be ascertained by the appointment of the international commission, and to be occupied by German troops by October 10th.

"5. The International Commission referred to will determine the territories in which plebiscites are to be held. These territories will be occupied by international bodies until the plebiscites have been completed. The same Commission will fix the conditions under which a plebiscite is to be held taking as a basis the conditions of the Saar plebiscite. The Commission will also fix a date not later than the end of November on which the plebiscite will be held.

"6. The final determination of these frontiers will be cleared up by an international commission. The commission will also be entitled to recommend to the four Powers—Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy—in certain exceptional cases, minor modifications in the strictly ethnological determination of the zones which are to be transferred without plebiscite.

"7. There will be the right of option into and out of transferred territory, the option to be exercised within six days of the date of this agreement. A German-Czechoslovak commission shall determine the details of the option, consider ways of facilitating transfer of populations, and settle questions of principle arising out of the said transfers.

"8. The Czechoslovak Government will within a period of four weeks from the date of this agreement release from their military and police forces any Sudeten German prisoners who are serving terms of imprisonment for political offences.

"His Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom and the French Government have entered into the above agreement on the basis that they stand by the offer contained in

Paragraph Six of the Anglo-French proposals of September 19th relating to an international guarantee of the new boundaries of the Czechoslovak State, against unprovoked aggression.

When the questions of Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia have been settled, Germany and Italy for their part will give a guarantee to Czechoslovakia.

"The heads of the Governments of the four Powers declare that the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, if not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, shall form the subject of another meeting of the heads of the Governments of the Four Powers here present."

These terms were handed to Prague with a request from the British Government that they must be accepted by noon the same day. Thus the Czech ministers had only a few hours to decide the fate of their country and their people.

Was this betrayal? I leave the answer to you.

The decision of the Czechoslovak Government was soon made. Their reply was dignified:

"The Czechoslovak Government, after having considered the decisions of the conference in Munich, taken without and against them, find no other means but to accept, and have nothing to add."

Meanwhile Hitler had been telling the world that he had no designs on anything or anyone.

"The Sudetenland is the last territorial claim I have to make in Europe," he declared at Berlin on September 26th. "I have assured Mr. Chamberlain and I emphasize it now, that when this problem is solved Germany has no more territorial problems in Europe.

"I have further assured him that at the moment when Czechoslovakia has solved its other problem—that is when the Czechs shall have come to an understanding with their

other minorities—I shall not be interested in the Czech State any more, and that, so far as I am concerned, I can guarantee it.”

And, in order to lull Poland into a sense of false security he added that he had already assured that country of her integrity “so far as Germany is concerned.”

On the night of September 30th, Downing Street was again packed with people. Appearing at a window of No. 10 the Premier sent the crowd frantic with joy with the statement: “This is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds.”

What was this so-called “peace with honour”?

It was an understanding between Mr. Chamberlain and Hitler, typed on a “scrap of paper.” Stepping from his plane at Heston earlier that afternoon, Mr. Chamberlain, all smiles, had waggled this same “scrap of paper” before the wildly cheering crowd and told them that he and Hitler had come to an epoch-making decision. In Mr. Chamberlain’s own words—“Here it is:

“We, the German Fuehrer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting to-day and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.

“We regard the agreement (the Munich agreement) signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

“We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference

and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe." It was signed by Hitler and Mr. Chamberlain.

It seemed wonderful. Chamberlain was hailed as a great peacemaker—a greater peacemaker even than President Woodrow Wilson.

But out in Prague there was mourning.

The world breathed freely again. Yet there were many statesmen all over Europe and America who sounded the warning tocsin.

"The terms of peace have been almost unbelievably harsh," said Mr. L. S. Amery to his constituents. "The Czechs have had to submit, not merely to the terms of an ultimatum, but to terms harsher than those inflicted upon a defeated nation immediately after the greatest war. During the respite—it may only be a brief one—which the Prime Minister has secured, we must come closer together in facing a common danger sufficiently to make it possible for Parliament to pass and the nation to accept some form of national service which will permit our man power and national resources to be organized for our national safety."

Thus, within forty-eight hours of the signing of the "peace with honour," statesmen were already looking forward to the next crisis. And many felt ashamed of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia.

Having got what he wanted Hitler proceeded to issue threats wrapped up in peace declarations. "As a peace-loving man I have made every effort to give the German nation the defence and the weapons which are appropriate to persuade others also for peace . . ."

He was also confident that now there would be a long period of peace.

But he had not yet finished with Czechoslovakia. In a few weeks he began to issue more demands. Not content with the five zones of Sudeten territory, he claimed sixty villages with 30,000 Czech inhabitants, and no Germans. He wanted

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frontier corrections near Pilzen because his projected great motor road from Bavaria to Sudetenland would otherwise cross Czech territory. He demanded some suburbs of the Danube port of Bratislava, because he needed facilities there.

The hard-pressed Czechs decided to concede the demands, and granted Germany the right to build a motor highway from Breslau to Vienna. It cut in half what was left of Czechoslovakia.

Simultaneously the Czechs were faced with trouble with the Slovaks and Ruthenians. Bills had been presented to give them a wide measure of autonomy. But the Slovaks were far from satisfied. The Slovak Premier, Joseph Tiso, had the audacity to demand from the Czechs an indemnity of £150,000,000 for having withheld autonomy from the Slovaks for twenty years.

Under the Munich Pact, Britain and France had guaranteed the new frontiers of mutilated Czechoslovakia. A cheering House of Commons heard the promise from the Defence Co-ordinator Sir Thomas Inskip, that the guarantee would "in practice" operate at once. If Czechoslovakia were attacked without provocation, Britain would take all steps to preserve its integrity.

But, it appeared, there was a qualification. The frontiers of Czechoslovakia had not then been finally fixed by the German-Czech Commission. Thus it was possible to drive a horse and cart through this so-called guarantee.

Of course, the guarantee never operated.

On March 15th Germany seized Czechoslovakia, and less than a week later annexed Memel, the Lithuanian port on the Baltic.

And this is the quaint statement of Adolf Hitler, which discloses that he was a lunatic as well as a knave:

"The Czech nation, with the sum total of its skill and ability, its industry, its diligence, its love of its native soil and of its own national heritage, deserves our respect. . . .

That which the best and wisest Czechs have struggled for decades to obtain is as a matter of course granted to this people in the National-Socialist German Reich—namely, the right to their own nationality, and the right to foster this nationality and revive it. . . .”

Once more he rounded off this lying peroration with the declaration: “I have never ceased to uphold the view that the necessity of a free access to the sea for the Polish State cannot be ignored.”

By this time European statesmen had not only learned that Hitler’s word could not be relied upon, but they could also see that his oft-repeated peaceful intentions against neighbouring States meant that he contemplated using pressure against them.

When, therefore, would Hitler attack Poland?

And did Hitler and his Nazi followers believe they would get away with still another coup?

Up to the present they had been fairly confident that a general war would not result. The next crisis, however, would be one of even greater magnitude than Czechoslovakia. Thus the Nazi leaders proceeded to put their personal fortunes in safe places.

It was revealed that they had feathered their nests to good purpose. Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop had foreign hoardings to the tune of nearly £2,000,000. He had insured himself for more than a million pounds, his wife for nearly £150,000 and his son for £38,000.

Goering had £1,500,000 tucked away, while his wife was insured for big amounts in three countries.

Goebbels transferred abroad about a million and three quarters; Rudolf Hess, Hitler’s deputy about £800,000.

The fortune of Labour Leader Ley was estimated at nearly £400,000, and that of Police Chief Heinrich Himmler at a similar figure. “Jew Baiter” Streicher’s fortune was a modest £80,000. Hitler himself had invested the huge income from *Mein Kampf* in Germany.

Chapter 14

Danzig

“The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, tho’ her sacred blood doth drown
The fields, and out of every smouldering town
Cries to Thee . . .
‘Lord, how long shall these things be?’ ”

Thus did Tennyson shed a tear for Poland in her former agonies.

Today the poets are silent. The issues are too great.

It is not only Poland: it is almost the whole of Europe that is crushed under the oppressor’s heel.

But Poland was the issue that brought Britain into war. Were we justified in risking our own existence in an attempt to save that unfortunate country? The answer lies in Poland’s history.

Warsaw’s gates have fallen once again. Many times since the sixteenth century they have crashed and risen again.

In 1702 the city was taken by the Swedes, and in 1794 by the Russians. Prussia owned it from 1795 to 1806, and in 1813 it was seized by the Russians again. Much blood flowed in Warsaw in the years 1830, 1862, and 1905.

Belgium is said to be the cockpit of Europe, but only by those who give no thought to Poland. For beneath the sur-

face of Polish soil lay the mouldering bones of a multitude of heroes.

The greatest of them, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, sleeps in a mighty mound at Cracow, now in the hands of the invader.

The little cottager to-day gazes gloomily at the picture of Poland's hero, Kosciuszko, hanging on the wall. Have they been all in vain, these fights for freedom? What has Poland done that she should be the shuttlecock of Germany and Russia?

Poland was buffeted from all sides in Kosciuszko's day. Cajoled and threatened in turn by Prussia, Austria and Russia she was at last compelled to conclude an alliance with Prussia. The two countries guaranteed each other's possessions, and undertook to render mutual assistance in the case of either being attacked.

That treaty was valueless—as valueless as the pact which the two countries made a few years ago. And it was Germany who broke it then, as now.

In 1791 Russia declared war on Poland. All the male Poles rallied to the aid of their country, believing that Frederick William II of Prussia would honour his engagements. He replied to the Polish appeal with a refusal, arguing that he had never approved a new constitution that Poland had set up. Thus Poland fought alone.

With a little army of 46,000 stalwarts Poland held the invader back for four months. Then Warsaw fell. Russia grabbed a quarter of a million square miles.

Peace for a few months. Then Kosciuszko attacked the Russians at the head of new forces. Though weak in numbers, and poorly armed, the Poles scored a great victory at Raclawice.

Poland would have lived but for the treachery of Prussia. Afraid that Russia would get all the spoils, the mailed fist descended. Kosciuszko gallantly defended his armies against the hordes of Russia and Prussia, but was forced back into Warsaw.

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The city held its foes for two months. At length the besiegers had to retire. Eventually at Praga Poland received her death blow.

Rightly in the pages of Polish history, it is written down that the glory of this campaign belonged to the defenders.

But, where the corpse is, the vultures are to be found. Rapaciously they fell upon stricken Poland. Russia, Prussia and Austria proceeded to pick the flesh from the bones.

But even in defeat the "heart of Poland had not ceased to quiver."

Rising in the West was Napoleon. The Poles saw in him a deliverer. They trekked across the European wilderness, and took their places among the troops of Bonaparte. Polish legions in the Corsican's service were among the best he had. They fought as separate units, commanded by Polish officers.

But Kosciuszko was disillusioned. Poles might die on European battlefields for Napoleon if they chose. He himself would have none of Bonaparte's flattery. He could see farther ahead than any of his compatriots. Napoleon had no intention of restoring independence to Poland.

Napoleon defeated, Kosciuszko turned to Alexander of Russia in vain. Poland knocked at the door of the European Chancelleries, pleaded her cause. They would not listen. The vultures would not vomit up what they had eaten.

But Poland's heart did not "cease to quiver." Through the years she strove to be heard, and at times fought like a terrier against the mastiffs on either side of her.

To the outbreak of the Great War the Polish problem as the Great Powers condescendingly called it, was still unsolved.

The Versailles Treaty sought to solve it. Now the problem has a war all to itself.

At Doorn, where William Hohenzollern is in enforced retirement there is a picture of Frederick the Great. The

ex-Kaiser, it is said, frequently gazes upon that painting. One wonders what thoughts cross his mind as he does so.

Adolf Hitler, too, has a picture of Frederick Hohenzollern. And we are told he gets his inspiration from the lamented King of Prussia.

And we can verily believe that to be true, for it was Frederick who laid down the principle that has guided Prussian policy towards Poland ever since.

On the first occasion when the vultures swooped down upon Poland, the cynical Frederick wrote to his brother Henry, "We are going to partake of the same eucharistic body which is Poland, and if it is not for the good of our souls, it will surely be a great object for the good of our States."

Frederick wanted Pomerania. He admitted that the inhabitants of this Palatinate were of Polish nationality. But what was a Pole or two to Frederick the Great?

So he proceeded to annex the territory. But when his advisers pointed out to him that there were more fertile and richer provinces in other parts of Poland, he silenced them with the remark: "Whoever possesses the estuary of the Vistula and the City of Danzig will be more a master in Poland than her own Government."

Now, it goes without saying that as Frederick the Great has guided in spirit the foreign policy of Prussia for two centuries, his opinion in regard to Danzig and Pomerania (the so-called Corridor), must be respected.

And therein is the explanation of Hitler's anxiety to possess Danzig and the Polish Corridor.

It was one of the glaring mistakes of the Peace Conference to make Danzig a free city. It disclosed weakness, uncertainty, a lack of interest in the history books, a tendency to dispose of the "Polish problem," without sufficient consideration.

Consider the past of Danzig. For more than three hundred

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years from the middle of the fifteenth century, the city was the property of Poland. It was one of the greatest seaports of Europe, with a population in the seventeenth century of nearly 80,000 people. Just before the dawn of the eighteenth century it was seized by Prussia. In twenty years the population dropped to 16,000.

The Poles never had a fair deal during the twenty years that Danzig was a free city under the terms of the Peace Treaty. The League of Nations administration could not eradicate the feeling that the Poles were interlopers there. Poland soon had enough, and built their new seaport of Gdynia. But whoever possesses Danzig must necessarily dominate Gdynia.

Next, consider the so-called Corridor, or Pomerania, or, as it was first called after the Peace Treaty, West Prussia.

It came into the possession of the Poles at the end of the tenth century. The Teutonic knights wrenched Pomerania from the Poles in 1308, and held the territory until 1454 when Poland received it back, and owned it until the first partition of that country in 1772. It was much smaller as restored to the Poles under the Peace Treaty. Its population, until the present war broke out, was 90 per cent Polish and 10 per cent German.

Can you wonder that Poland is fighting for the right to retain this territory?

On September 1st, 1939, the erstwhile hod-carrier, Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich, went to war.

The heart of Poland was destined to be tested as it had never been tested before. With an overwhelming superiority in men and material, Adolf Hitler, the reincarnation of Beelzebub, began to blast his way through a country that had done him no wrong.

And, in the van of the invading hordes went the shade of Frederick the Great.

From President Moscicki went out the pathetic appeal

to his people: "Early this morning Germany launched an attack on the Polish State.

"In this historic moment I appeal to all our citizens with the deep conviction that the whole nation will, in defence of its freedom, independence and honour, rally round the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, and give a proper reply to the German aggressor, as it has so often done in the past.

"The whole nation, conscious that the blessing of the Almighty rests on its fight for a sacred and just cause, and united in the Army, will take up the struggle until victory is complete."

Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland—the same cry went out from each. Two appeals fell upon a war-hating world that gave no response. Poland's appeal sent the battalions marching.

Two days later a shiver of fear convulsed the nations as the voice of Premier Neville Chamberlain pronounced the death sentence on Adolf Hitler. In a statement in the House of Commons on the day that the Germans invaded Poland, the Prime Minister had said: "The time is come when action rather than speech is required. Eighteen months ago in this House I prayed that the responsibility might not fall upon me to ask this country to accept the awful arbitrament of war. I fear that I may not be able to avoid that responsibility

"... the responsibility for this terrible catastrophe lies on the shoulders of one man—the German Chancellor, who has not hesitated to plunge the world into misery in order to serve his own senseless ambitions."

There was no other course but to crush the raving lunatic who was setting the world ablaze. But, contrasted with Hitler's flamboyant boasting and threats, were the quiet, emotional words of the Prime Minister, as he placed upon the pages of history that crushing condemnation of a man

from whose mouth lies and deceit had gushed for seven years, and whose victims lay in thousands of unhallowed graves.

"You can imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed."

Is there anyone who can deny this assertion of Prime Minister Chamberlain?

Is there another case in history in which a British Prime Minister had to suffer the caprices of one individual without retaliating?

Did ever a British Prime Minister go so near the borderline of complete capitulation to a boastful mountebank?

It was called "appeasement" because no other word could be found for it. The nations of the world were glad to accept it as such, though there may have been criticism abroad.

If there had been a spark of honour or feeling in Hitler, he would have rejoiced at the atmosphere created by the so-called Munich agreement, and the gasp of relief that went round the nations.

There was not even a spark.

"His action shows convincingly that there is no chance of expecting that this man will ever give up his practice of using force to gain his will," declared Prime Minister Chamberlain. "He can only be stopped by force, and we and France to-day, in fulfilment of our obligations, are going to the aid of Poland, who is so bravely resisting this wicked and unprovoked attack upon her people.

"We have a clear conscience. We have done all that any country could do to establish peace, but a situation in which no word given by Germany's ruler could be trusted and no people or country could feel themselves safe had become intolerable. And now that we have resolved to finish it I know you will all play your part with calmness and courage . . .

"Now may God bless you all and may He defend the right. For it is evil things that we shall be fighting, against brute force, bad faith, injustice and oppression and persecution.

"And, against them, I am certain that right will prevail."

And answer came from every city and outpost of the British Commonwealth of Nations—and from the cities and Provinces of France—

"Amen!"

Some have declared that Hitler was not responsible solely for this war. Those people bring out the old bogey of secret agreements, underhand diplomacy, balance of power, and "encirclement." Some declare that Poland was unready to compromise on the question of Danzig.

We have already dealt with the German rights to Danzig and Corridor. They, in fact, have no rights to either territory.

Yet, in case the doubt lingers that Poland, by refusing to listen to reason, precipitated Hitler on his mad project, let us consider the events just prior to the outbreak of war.

It was well known that Britain and France had guaranteed the integrity of Poland. It was also well known that there was an agreement between Germany and Poland to last for ten years from January 26th, 1934, in which it was provided that in no circumstances would either party "proceed to the application of force for the purpose of reaching a decision" in any dispute between them.

That agreement was confirmed by Adolf Hitler in numerous speeches during the subsequent five years, in which he also reiterated that he had no designs against Poland.

On March 31st, 1939, an agreement was concluded between Poland, Britain and France in which Poland was assured of help "in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist."

Meanwhile, however, there had been an intensive campaign by Germany for the restoration of Danzig. Poland was charged with atrocities. It was the usual method of procedure now so familiar. In June 1939 accusations were made against Polish customs inspectors in connection with the Free City.

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It was reported to the British Government that a Free Corps was being established in Danzig, and that military preparations were moving apace.

In the House of Commons the Prime Minister defined the British Government's attitude to the Danzig problem. There was no mistaking how Britain stood.

And on July 14th Germany was officially informed that in the event of German aggression Great Britain would support Poland.

Thus, as the Prime Minister put it, the situation was "crystal clear." If Poland were invaded, and prepared to fight for her integrity, and asked for the assistance of Great Britain and France, the Allies were bound to supply that help.

To save the peace of the world the Allies went to almost intolerable lengths. They tried to bring about a discussion between Germany and Poland, though there was no attempt to make Poland appear in the role of a naughty child.

The Allies intended a straightforward, round-table discussion in which the Poles and Germans would meet as equals. At the same time the independence of Poland was to be understood. As Hitler had frequently declared that he had no designs on the sovereignty of Poland, there should have been no difficulty about this conference. However, there was.

On August 30th two mobilized armies faced each other on the Polish frontier. On that day the British Government communicated with the Nazis in a final attempt to prevent war. This is an important paragraph in that letter:

"His Majesty's Government fully recognize the need for speed in the initiation of discussions, and they share the apprehensions of the Chancellor arising from the proximity of two mobilized armies standing face to face. They would accordingly most strongly urge that both parties should undertake that, during the negotiations, no aggressive

military movement will take place. His Majesty's Government feel confident that they could obtain such an undertaking from the Polish Government if the German Government would give similar assurances."

Immediate reply came from the Polish Government, who had received a copy of the letter, that their troops would not commit aggression while the conference was taking place.

No reply came from the German Government.

The conference to which the letter referred and which never ultimately took place, was suggested by the British Government, several days before the outbreak of hostilities.

Hitler avoided all reference to a conference in the various letters he wrote replying to Allied communications. On August 28th the British Government reiterated that a "reasonable solution of the differences between Germany and Poland could and should be effected by agreement between the two countries on lines which would include the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests."

On August 29th Hitler replied demanding that a Polish negotiator should go to Berlin within 24 hours, when he would be handed proposals for a solution acceptable to Germany.

Britain telegraphed to Berlin that it was unreasonable for Germany to demand a Polish representative's presence in Berlin so soon, and in a confirmatory note the British Government added: "We cannot advise Polish Government to comply with this procedure, which is wholly unreasonable." They urged that the German Government should adopt the normal procedure of inviting the Polish ambassador to call to receive the German proposals.

On the night of August 31st, the Nazi Government broadcast a list of sixteen points on which they declared they had been willing to negotiate, but having received no intimation from Poland that she was ready to discuss them the Reich Government considered its proposals rejected.

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When the world heard this broadcast the first reaction was that Poland had refused to negotiate despite the fact that the terms were certainly a reasonable basis for discussion. On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that Germany intended to submit such proposals to Poland.

The terms had suddenly been produced out of the hat, as it were.

At all events, they were never communicated to the Polish Government at all. How, then, could they accept them?

This broadcast, in which Germany tried to justify in the eyes of neutrals, her contemplated invasion of Poland on the following morning, was in fact the first indication which the Allies and Poland had had as to the nature of the terms which Germany had declared on August 29th she would submit for consideration by Poland.

As no one had heard further about the proposals by the evening of the 30th, Sir Neville Henderson called on von Ribbentrop, Nazi Foreign Minister, to discover the reason.

Ribbentrop was abusive. At top speed he read out a document that contained sixteen points. The main points were the restoration of Danzig to Germany, to become a demilitarized city and purely commercial, and the handing over of a part of the Corridor, the Polish seaport of Gdynia to remain in Polish hands.

It is admitted that there was something concrete in these proposals. It is even possible that Poland might have accepted them as a solution to the dispute. But when Sir Neville Henderson asked for a copy of the document, which he fully expected to receive, Ribbentrop declared that it was too late as no Polish representative with full powers to negotiate had called to receive the proposals.

Now, according to diplomatic practice, it was the duty of Ribbentrop to indicate to the Polish Government that he had the document ready. He did nothing of the kind.

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He expected Poland to come as a suppliant. That night, Wednesday, August 30th, was the final time beyond which Germany had declared she could not negotiate.

Thus Ribbentrop claimed that Poland was in the wrong because she had not by Wednesday night agreed to discuss proposals of which she had never heard.

Sir Nevile Henderson, in his despatch to London on the interview with Ribbentrop, declares that he was able only to grasp a general outline of the German proposals because the speed used by the Foreign Minister in reading it.

"Herr von Ribbentrop's whole demeanour during an unpleasant interview was aping Herr Hitler at his worst," declared the British Ambassador. Ribbentrop complained frequently about Polish mobilization. To which the Ambassador replied that it was not surprising, since Germany had mobilized herself.

On the night of the 31st a Polish representative did ultimately see Ribbentrop, and told him what they had told him before—that the Polish Government was willing to negotiate on an equal basis.

That assurance made no impression on Ribbentrop. The sixteen points were broadcast, and when the Polish Ambassador, M. Lipski, tried to get into communication with Warsaw, he found that all the communications between Germany and Poland had been deliberately cut by the German Government.

Still one more effort was made by the British Government at 11 p.m. on August 31st. They sent a telegram to Sir Nevile Henderson informing him that the Polish Government were trying to get into touch with the German Government through the Polish Ambassador. Sir Nevile was instructed to ask the German Government whether they agreed to an intermediary and suggested the name of Dr. Burckhardt, the Swiss who had acted as League of Nations High Commissioner at Danzig.

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There was no response. At 5.30 on the following morning Germany began operations against Poland.

On the evening of that day, Britain warned Germany that if Nazi forces were not withdrawn from Polish soil, Britain would carry out her obligations to Poland. No reply was received in twenty-four hours.

At 11 a.m. British Summer Time, September 3rd, Britain and France were at war with Germany.

In a speech to the Reichstag justifying his attack on Poland, Hitler defied the testimony of history by declaring that Danzig was, and is, a German city, that the Corridor was, and is, German. Both these territories, he declared, owed their cultural development exclusively to the German people.

"As in other German territories in the East," continued the hypocrite, "all German minorities living there have been ill-treated in the most distressing manner. More than one million people of German blood had in the years 1919-20 to leave their homeland."

Putting over the same old plea that he had tried to obtain satisfaction by peaceful methods, he declared that it was a lie "when the outside world says that we have tried to carry through our revisions by pressure."

This speech to the Reichstag was Hitler's most Machiavelian outburst of the whole of his career. True, he had lied a great deal before, but in none of his previous speeches did he emit such a string of falsehoods as on this occasion.

He had made proposals for peaceful settlements that had been rejected. He had proposed disarmament, and the elimination of certain methods of warfare. He had tried to solve the problem of Danzig and the Corridor by peaceful discussion.

Hitler's idea of "peaceful discussion," however, was to demand something first. If that demand could not be conceded there could be no discussion.

There was nothing new in these tactics. Germany had played exactly the same game for many years.

In that same Reichstag speech Hitler announced the most spectacular backsliding of his career—the agreement with Communist Russia.

“I am happy to be able to tell you of one event. You know that Russia and Germany are governed by two different doctrines. There was only one question that had to be cleared up. Germany has no intention of exporting its doctrine. Given the fact that Soviet Russia has no intention of exporting its doctrine to Germany, I no longer see any reason why we should still oppose one another. Any struggle between our people would only be of advantage to others. We have, therefore, resolved to conclude a pact which rules out for ever any use of violence between us. It imposes the obligation on us to consult together in certain European questions. It makes possible for us economic co-operation, and above all it assures that the powers of both these powerful States are not wasted against one another. Every attempt of the West to bring about any change in this will fail.

“At the same time I should like here to declare that this political decision means a tremendous departure for the future, and that it is a final one. Russia and Germany fought against one another in the World War. That shall and will not happen a second time.”

It is four centuries since the days of Niccolo Machiavelli. Until Hitler came on to the scene of world's politics, no one had seen the like of Machiavelli. Frederick the Great adopted the principles of this Florentine statesman, but he never did it with the ability of Adolf Hitler.

The creed of Machiavelli was that everything was honourable if it were a question of serving the State. Hitler once admitted that there was nothing wrong in lying for the Fatherland. There is nothing wrong in aggression if that aggression is going to benefit the State.

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Poland was beaten to her knees in a month. Then the Machiavelli in Hitler got busy again, putting out peace feelers. And with what innocent surprise Hitler received the reply that the Allies had not achieved their war aims!

What, then, were the Allies' war aims?

The answer was plain. They had gone to war to save Poland. They had not saved her, it is true. But they were going to restore her.

"But," argued the voice of Machiavelli Hitler, "you can get out of the war, if you want to. Poland has ceased to exist. You were not in time to save her, so you have fulfilled your contract."

But the Allies had a different idea of that contract.

Thus

"The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown
The fields, and out of every smouldering town
Cries to Thee. . . .
'Lord, how long shall these things be?' "

Chapter 15

War Guilt

There are two Germanys. The one has dominated the other for centuries. The dominant Germany has a war mentality, a love of fighting, of blood-letting, of hero-worship, of power, of persecution.

The subservient Germany has accepted the principles of the dominant Germany without question, because it lacks the capacity to think for itself.

Thus we have in Europe a people whose deeply rooted ideal is discipline. The dominant half imposes it, the subservient half accepts it.

There is another complication. There can be, and often is, in the individual German, the two extremes of humanity and inhumanity. Sometimes the individual regards himself as oppressed. At other times he loves to be oppressed. No other nation in the world shows such contradictions.

The German is a marvellous fellow in war—that is, if the war is going according to plan. But if it is a defeat there is nothing worse than war.

Germany entered the present war with defeat staring her in the face. Thus this war is horrible; it was thrust upon a Germany who did not want it. The war guilt is with the Allies.

It was the same in the Great War. Before 1916 one heard little from the Germans that the war was caused by the

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Allies. It was not until the number of antagonists ranged against them began to increase that they cried out about guilt.

At the end, when they were compelled to accept an ignominious peace they were indignant at the reproach that they had caused the war. If they had won nothing would have been heard about war guilt at all. They would have been quite content to have that stigma fastened upon them for ever.

But they were defeated and it was a sop to their egotism to believe that they had not caused the catastrophe, but that it had been thrust upon them when they were unprepared.

No other subject has taken such an important place in post-war discussion in Germany than war guilt. More than two thousand books were written by Germans on the subject. And by saying often enough that Germany was innocent, she has succeeded in convincing many people who ought to have known better. Cold, hard facts are better evidence than the frequent reiteration of a lying story.

Who would have believed that such a dignified institution as the University of Jena would have stamped on every letter going abroad the device: "Whoever maintains that Germany was responsible for the War, lies. This lie is the root of our misery"?

But on one of those occasions when Hitler has let the cat out of the bag, he admitted: "The war of 1914, God knows, was not imposed on the masses; the whole nation desired it."

True, the whole nation desired it. Yet, at the same time it *was* imposed on the masses with the same subtlety that the will of the ruling class of Germany has been imposed on the people for many generations.

The question of war guilt goes back far beyond 1914. It begins at a very early period in the history of the German nation. Consider what Gibbon, the historian, has written

about the German tribes, and remember that he is writing of a period to which the Nazis love to go back in search of national traditions to prove the superiority of the Germans over the people of every other nation.

This is what Gibbon has to say:

"The care of the house and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and slaves. The lazy warrior, destitute of every art that might employ his leisure hours, consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food.

"And yet, by a wonderful diversity of nature, the same barbarians are by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind. They delight in sloth, they detest tranquillity. The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and, by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a more lively sense of his existence.

"In the dull intervals of peace these barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and excessive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their passions, the other by extinguishing their reason, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies. Their debts of honour they discharged with the utmost fidelity. The desperate gamester, who staked his person and liberty on a last throw of the dice, patiently submitted to the decision of fortune, and suffered himself to be bound, chastised and sold into remote slavery by his weaker but more lucky antagonist."

The Germans were the most barbarous people of Europe

in Roman times. They lacked culture and education, were indolent, careless of the future, and contemptuous of their own lives and the lives of others.

There is little difference between the Germany two thousand years ago and the Germany to-day. That nation's much-vaunted culture chiefly concerns war.

Germany has rattled the sabre for many centuries. But it is strange that such a warlike nation has never succeeded in building up a great empire. At the same time, perhaps, it is no mystery. It is the lack of that very culture which they claim to possess that has prevented the rise of a German colonial empire.

Just before the seventeenth century it seemed that the Germans would make history of a different kind. The war mentality was disappearing. After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the German princes were more disposed to form alliances with foreign Powers. Their States, particularly the larger ones, became to all intents and purposes independent.

Unfortunately, unity has been bad for Germany, for the southern States have allowed themselves to be dictated to by Prussia, and it is that country which is responsible for war mentality. With the rise of Prussia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries warlike spirit was revived, and it spread again over the whole of Germany.

The rise of Prussia was coincident with the rise of the Hohenzollerns, a House of Rulers which, throughout its history, has sought to express itself by military adventures that have bathed Europe in blood. Certainly from the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick III, became King of Prussia, the dominating spirit of the Hohenzollerns was war.

Frederick III was a weak, vain, stupid individual. He had a humped back which he strived to hide beneath a huge wig. His obsession was a kingdom, and almost the whole of his time was spent in make-believe feasts, processions and etiquette.

His cousins of Orange and Saxony were respectively monarchs of Britain and Spain. By pestering and threatening the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold, he finally got the latter's permission to place upon his head a crown of Prussia. Thenceforth he called himself Frederick I, King of Prussia. Under his rule the Prussian peasants were crushed with taxation to satisfy his magnificence.

His son, Frederick William I, was a little more sensible. He handled his money with more discretion, but was thick-skulled and peasant-like when he was without his uniform. He, too, had strange obsessions—thick soup, thin beer, shag tobacco.

He interfered in everything, admitted no laws, arrested ministers who disagreed with him and put them in dungeons. He forced his generals to buy the very bad pictures he painted of them, and rode and drove about from daylight to dusk, giving orders and finding fault.

He squeezed so much money out of the nobles in taxes that they complained about him to the Imperial Council at Vienna. Frederick William took no notice, and went on doing just as he pleased. "I will stabilize the sovereignty, and set the crown as fast as a rock of bronze," he declared. "I am king and lord and will do what I wish! Holiness is God's, but everything else is mine."

He had the tallest soldiers in Europe, and no matter their nationality, he would pay up to £4,000 to get even one. He had giants kidnapped abroad and brought to Prussia. This craze nearly landed him into several wars.

His son, Frederick the Great, began the Prussian domination of the smaller States of Europe. He had hardly begun to reign when he provoked a war to conquer Silesia, though he had no claim whatever to this State. In two wars he succeeded in wresting Silesia from Maria Theresa of Austria.

Finally, half Europe was leagued against him. In 1756 he entered the Seven Years' War in which a million men fell.

In the end Frederick gained nothing, though he did not lose even a village, despite the fact that his enemies had declared that they would break the power of Prussia once and for all.

At all events, it kept Frederick quiet to the end of his life, and caused him to pursue other than military aims.

His nephew and successor, Frederick William II was sensual and lazy. His chief pleasures in life were favourites, male and female. What his predecessors had accumulated he squandered. He was lucky to get something out of the partition of Poland, for it was a saying in Europe at the time that the army of Frederick the Great had ceased to fight.

The next Hohenzollern, Frederick William III, lost more than half his possessions in the Napoleonic war. His son, Frederick William IV, was as big a failure as his father. He would make a decision and abandon it as soon as taken.

In March 1848 the Prussian people made an attempt to overthrow the despotism that was crushing them. Revolution broke out. The King, mortally afraid, promised a proper constitution.

Up went the barricades. The troops fired. In his palace Frederick William shivered with fright. The revolt ended with victory for the people. They got their new constitution.

His brother ascended the Prussian throne at the age of sixty-three. During his reign with the aid of Bismarck, the Hohenzollern arrogance overrode Europe.

It was from this time that the war mentality of the German people began to assert itself.

Meanwhile there was a duel between Austria and Prussia for the headship of Germany. Some of the independent States wanted to join Austria and some Prussia. Troubles in Hesse brought into that State troops from both countries. When war seemed imminent Prussia gave way.

Then Austria and Prussia together suddenly invaded Denmark, crushed the Danes and took over Slesvig and Holstein. This led to war. The winner was destined to be-

come head of a German federation, and although hostilities began primarily because the two countries could not agree as to the disposition of the spoils of the Danish war, in the background was a struggle for the supremacy of the German federation.

Austria was soundly trounced at Sadowa, and the majority of the German States, including Hanover, Saxony and Bavaria, who had supported Austria, shared in the defeat.

The war ended Austria's pretensions, and brought about an increase in Prussia's importance. A new union called the North German Federation, with the King of Prussia as head, was set up, and it included all the States north of the Main.

But the greatest and final step in the union of Germany came after the Franco-Prussian War. In January, 1871, the North German Federation became the German Empire or Reich—the first Reich—with William I of Prussia as its first emperor. The Reich consisted of twenty-six States, but the affairs of the Empire were mainly controlled by Prussia.

The aim of Germany from 1871 to 1914 was first the consolidation of the Empire, and then world dominion.

This brief history of Germany shows that a war mentality has always existed, though it may have been suppressed at times. Mirabeau spoke the truth when he declared: "War is the natural industry of Prussia."

Frederick the Great could see no other arbitrament but war. "God is always with the stronger battalions," he insisted.

It may well be asked why this war mentality has not been eliminated long ago, for the nation has produced many great men in philosophy, art, literature, science and music. One can respect Germany for having had Gutenberg, Holbein, Kepler, Leibnitz, Immanuel Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Bach, Handel, Gluck, Beethoven. Schumann, Wagner, and so many other great names.

It is probable that the love of war would have long since been eradicated from the southern States had it not been fostered by the Hohenzollerns, supported by the Junkers or landlords, the ruling class of North Germany.

The Junkers are a curious class. Their ancestors were Crusaders, the Teutonic Knights, who settled in East Prussia and Poland in the thirteenth century. They appropriated considerable territory, and caused perpetual wars in that part of Europe, until they were finally defeated by Poland.

Their descendants had mixed blood—German, original Prussian and Polish. After the time of Frederick the Great, whom they supported in his wars, they became a powerful party of aristocrats and the ruling class of Prussia.

It has hitherto been easy for the Junkers to fool the middle and lower-class Germans, and play upon their love of military glory. Germany has many harsh things to say of Georges Clemenceau, but he summed up the mentality of Germans when he declared that they love death, not life.

The Junkers have always held themselves aloof, claiming to be outside the rest of Germany.

"I think of this country with horror," said Winkemann, the great scholar, "It is better to be a circumcised Turk than a Prussian." And it is curious that the south German people themselves thought the same thing. At one time the Junkers even regarded the Hohenzollerns as jumped-up interlopers.

But, during the nineteenth century, when Prussia was becoming powerful, the Junkers began a new plan of campaign, no less than the domination of the whole of the German States.

They had no use for poets and thinkers, for musicians, even for art at all.

Following the Napoleonic Wars the two Germanys began to develop side by side. It was just a question as to which would ultimately represent the soul of Germany. In the end it was

the Junkers and the military party that prevailed. The other half of Germany fought in the wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870 believing they were fighting for a tradition of freedom. The masses were inspired with enthusiasm for the liberty which the Junkers prated about so often, and the men in the ranks were content that they were doing their duty.

But the officers and the military leaders were fighting for no such tradition. The glory and the power of Prussia were their guiding principle.

And William I, after the foundation of the Empire at Versailles, made it perfectly clear that he regarded the Empire as the "lengthened arm of Prussia." At the Union Prussia was not absorbed in Germany; the rest of Germany became a dependency of Prussia.

The Junkers were even too powerful for Bismarck. Bismarck's object in consolidating Germany was far different to that of the Junkers. Bismarck was a statesman and not a military leader, although he is generally regarded as such. He was genuinely desirous of uniting Germany without the taint of militarism, but he was compelled at last to accept from the Hohenzollerns and the Junkers the traditions of Prussia and the glorification of force, as the principles on which the Empire was founded.

In his Memoirs Bismarck relates that he told the King of Prussia in 1866 after the victory of that year, "Our task must be the establishment of German unity under the leadership of the King of Prussia." That was a principle to which William I could not agree at first. His aim was territorial expansion. In other words, the rest of Germany were to become colonies of Prussia.

The same thing occurred after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Bismarck insisted that William I should be called the German Emperor, and not the Emperor of Germany.

To the ordinary mind there is little difference in these

titles, but to Bismarck and William I there was a great deal. If William had been called the Emperor of Germany, it would have been an acceptance on the part of the rest of Germany that he was their conqueror.

Thus it was that the Hohenzollern temperament showed its worst side on the very day that Germany became a unity. "His Majesty," records Bismarck, "was so angry with me on account of the course of events that, on leaving the platform of the princes, he ignored me, who stood alone in the free space in front of it, and walked past me to shake hands with the generals standing behind me. This attitude persisted several days."

At the same time the victory was with the Junkers, and gradually discipline and tradition became the dominating principle in Germany. The few intellectuals and lovers of art who refused to subscribe to the principle were in the minority.

The aim of the Junkers and militarists was universal hegemony. They even induced commerce and industry to believe that it was not their own efforts that were making Germany great commercially, but the fact that they had behind them a great army.

So it was that the German nation was easily fooled. Like sheep all classes followed the men who had made themselves leaders.

And it is the same trait in the German character that the Nazis have exploited. Which makes this strenuous denial of war guilt most inexplicable.

Reference has already been made to the library of books written by Germans on the subject. A volume with a new argument in favour of Germany got a ready sale. If Germany were really innocent of having contributed to the disaster of 1914, one could feel sympathy for her.

Yet it is not a question of belief; it is a question of fact that Germany was more culpable than any of the other partici-

pants, not excluding Russia. And no amount of hair-splitting and academic dissertation on who said this or who did this, can absolve Germany.

Since the time of Bismarck the Prussians, if not the remainder of Germany, looked forward to what they called "The Day." This expression meant that some time or other they were going to march, against whom was not certain, but certainly against some country or countries.

At the first International Peace Conference at The Hague in 1899, it was intended to discuss the limitation of armaments. A motion to shelve the discussion was made by Germany, and shelved it was. Germany was beginning to build a big navy to put beside her great army.

A second conference in 1907 met with like fate, so far as the limitation of armaments was concerned. If Germany had been a peaceful nation she would have made her contribution to such a discussion. Britain would have been glad of an opportunity of reducing her armaments, for the burden of cost, though only a tithe of what it has been of recent years, was causing concern in the country.

Thus the first attempt at a disarmament conference was jettisoned by Germany.

What was Germany's game? She had no great colonial empire to protect. She argued that the Great Powers of Europe were casting covetous eyes on her growing mercantile marine. At the same time she raised the cry of "encirclement," a favourite of the Nazis in these days.

But if there were any attempt at encirclement Germany brought it upon herself, and it was her policy in the south-east of Europe that made her an enemy of Russia. For instance, to bolster Turkish rule in Europe, a rule that was fast tottering, Germany recreated Turkey's First Army Corps under the command of a Prussian officer, on the principle that whoever commanded this Corps controlled Constantinople and the Straits.

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Germany made the half-savage Albania into a kingdom with a German prince.

At the same time William II did everything in his power to ridicule Nicholas of Russia.

But Germany's intention to have a "show-down" in Europe before long was shown by the attitude of the Kaiser to Britain. Thus during the Boer War he sent the historic telegram to Paul Kruger offering him help. It was not until his advisers made it clear to him that, although Britain had a tough job in South Africa, she was by no means at an extremity, that he climbed down and weakly apologized.

In 1911 came the Agadir crisis. Germany, afraid that France was becoming too influential in Morocco, sent the cruiser *Panther* to Agadir to "protect her interests," though she had about as much interest there as China had.

Only a strong straightforward declaration from Britain caused Kaiser Wilhelm to retire into his shell.

Of course, these set-backs were annoying to Germany who awaited "The Day" still more impatiently.

In the barracks in Potsdam they pledged "The Day" at mess suppers. The young Imperial Eagles waited impatiently for the order to take their flight into the blue. A "vigorous and joyous" war was frequently discussed. After all, why were these young scions of Junker families all dressed up and having nowhere to go? Were there to be no medals, glory and fame?

So the Young Eagles fluttered in their cages, and the Old Eagles beamed upon them, only too anxious themselves to try the quality of their broods.

"Our army is becoming the laughing-stock of the street," young officers complained, when the "civvies" treated them with derision. "Why can't we have a war?"

They complained that they had had no war for forty years! Yet they had a war machine that was calculated to carry out a phenomenal "blitzkrieg."

Then it came. And the barracks resounded with the cheers and the tramp of marching feet.

The murder of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in June, 1914, at Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, precipitated the Great War, but, paradoxically, had nothing to do with it.

Austria regarded this murder as an excuse to send an ultimatum to Serbia, although the Serbian Government could have had no complicity in the crime.

The ultimatum included ten points. The Austro-Hungarian Government demanded categorical and satisfactory answers within forty-eight hours. Serbia accepted nine of the demands, and offered to submit the tenth to arbitration, after pressure from Russia and the Western Powers. The Austrian minister at Belgrade regarded the replies as unsatisfactory and forthwith departed from the capital.

Russia mobilized to support Serbia. This was an excuse for Germany to declare war on Russia and France. Germany occupied Luxembourg, contrary to the convention of 1867 guaranteeing that little country's neutrality, then invaded Belgium contrary to the Treaty of 1839 neutralizing that country.

Now, facts speak plainer than abstruse arguments. The series of events are perfectly clear, and are worth repeating categorically. Note them.

— The Archduke was murdered on June 28th by Yugoslav youths. Not even Serbians—mark you!—but Austrian subjects.

It took Austria nearly a month to send the ultimatum to Serbia. The moment was chosen when the French President was on the Baltic returning from a visit to Russia, and when British ministers were concerned about the imminent breakdown of an Irish Conference in London.

On July 25th the Serbian Government replied.

On July 26th, Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister, urged a conference of diplomatic representatives of Great

Britain, France, Italy and Germany to avoid war, and suggested the suspension of military operations, if any, that were being taken.

The French and Italian Governments accepted. Germany refused. The quarrel, said Germany, concerned Austria and Serbia alone. At the same time, it was well known that Germany had backed up Austria in all the demands she had been making upon Serbia for years. In the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian empire Serbia was a plague spot in south-east Europe, because the little country had visions of a larger Slav State, indeed, something like the Jugoslavia of to-day.

On July 28th Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

On July 29th Russia ordered mobilization.

Suddenly Germany showed a more conciliatory attitude. William II sent a telegram to Nicholas II and Austria was urged to resume negotiations with Serbia.

The Tsar countermanded the order for mobilization. It was not carried out. The military leaders of Russia had determined upon war.

At this point Germany declares that all was lost, that the Russian mobilization precipitated the war. But anyone who has a grain of common sense can see that even if Russia had moved against Austria, the conflict would have been localized if Germany had not taken the precipitate action of declaring war against France and Russia.

It is not a question whether Russia was justified in mobilizing to go to the aid of Serbia. The real question was: Was Germany justified in declaring war against Russia and France?

Europe was split up into two armed camps. On one side were the Central Powers—Germany and Austro-Hungary—and Italy. This combine was known as the Triple Alliance.

On the other hand were Britain, France and Russia in a combine known as the Triple Entente.

The ordinary person will naturally argue: "Why was it necessary to precipitate a general conflagration because of Austria's dispute with Serbia?"

Russia's action in mobilizing was, of course, not to be commended. But she had not declared war against Austria. A little give and take would have prevented hostilities. Germany was not prepared to give, she wanted to take.

The German militarists had been spoiling for a fight with someone for a long time. Russia's mobilization was just the chance they wanted. General von Moltke urged William II to declare war. William had gradually become less bellicose when he saw that the possible consequence was that Britain would come in.

On July 31st Germany presented a twelve-hour ultimatum to Russia demanding immediate demobilization. On the same day the German Government demanded a statement from Paris within eighteen hours whether that country would remain neutral.

If France were prepared to remain neutral Germany demanded a special guarantee from France in the shape of the surrender for the duration of the war of the French border fortresses of Toul and Verdun!

In face of that demand the French had no alternative but to order mobilization. On August 1st France declared that she would "consult her interests." Two days later Germany declared war on France.

The sequel is well known. Under the terms of the Belgian Treaty Britain had no alternative but to declare war on Germany, for the latter country was the aggressor.

Apart from these plain facts that stand out for anyone to see there are many incidentals that make the case far blacker for Germany.

For instance, on June 30th, the Kaiser received a report from his ambassador in Vienna. On this report William II pencilled the words: "It is exclusively Austria's business

to decide what she ought to do. If things turn out badly we can say that Germany did not want this. . . . The Serbs must be finished as soon as possible . . . now or never!"

On July 5th and 6th the Kaiser received a full statement of the Austrian case against Serbia. It was considered by him, the Imperial Chancellor, and others, and was approved. It was decided to support Austria-Hungary at all costs, whether it involved war with Russia or not. In accordance with this plan certain military measures were put in hand at Potsdam. Thus was Vienna encouraged to go on with her suppression of Serbia.

On the following day William II left for a holiday in Norwegian waters.

On July 13th Austria received a full report on the assassination of the Archduke from Austrian agents. These investigators admitted that there was no connection between the murderers and the Serbian State. Nevertheless, Conrad von Hotzendorff, Chief of the General Staff, declared that the crisis gave them an opportunity to proceed against Serbia, and they must do so at once.

William II returned from his convenient holiday on July 27th to learn that Serbia had conceded almost all the Austrian demands. Sir Edward Grey had proposed that the matter should be submitted to a conference of Ambassadors in London. Germany rejected these proposals with the comment that Austria "could not be asked to appear before a European Court of Areopagus."

The Kaiser further demanded that if Austria accepted the replies of Serbia she should be allowed to occupy Belgrade. "This must be done," declared William II, "in such a manner as to give Austria a pawn—Belgrade. This is necessary also in order to give the army which has been three times mobilized in vain, the appearance of a success in foreign eyes."

Was there ever such audacity as this?

"The Serbians are Orientals, and consequently deceivers, liars and hypocrites," added the All-Highest.

On July 30th when the Austrians were actually bombarding Belgrade, Nicholas II of Russia sent a pathetic telegram to William II. "I beg of you to clear up the cause of this difference," it ran. "It would be much better to submit the Austro-Serbian problem to The Hague Conference. I rely on your wisdom and friendship."

By this time Germany was becoming alarmed at the probable spread of the war. A gossamer thread held the world's peace. If Germany had advised Austria to stop the onslaught on Serbia and listen to reason, that thread would never have been broken.

Italy did not enter the war at that stage, despite the fact that she was a member of the Triple Alliance. It is said that she had a secret alliance with France. That may have been so. But she soon gave it as her opinion that Austria-Hungary was the aggressor against Serbia, and that under the terms of the Triple Alliance she was not bound to go to the aid of Austria and Germany.

Who, then, was guilty of the war?

Obviously, in the first place, Austria-Hungary fired the first shot, for she had determined upon the extermination of Serbia.

Secondly, Germany was to blame, because early in June she had given Austria-Hungary a blank cheque to go forward with her plan of attack on Serbia. The Dual Monarchy would never have had the courage to persist in her demands against Serbia in spite of Russia, if she had not had Germany's backing.

The World War, it is frequently said, was precipitated by the Russian military chiefs. But it is an undeniable fact that Russia would not have taken the course she did had it not been for the criminal activities of the Austrian Foreign Minister, aided and abetted by Berlin.

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But apart from what occurred in the summer of 1914 to cause the war, the Austrian Empire had for generations upset the equilibrium in south-east Europe, and caused bad relations between Germany and Russia. Germany herself by her Chauvinism had added her contribution.

That the German people wanted the war is shown by their attitude to it, at the outbreak of hostilities. At the same time they believed that Germany's military superiority was such that the war would soon be over.

There was optimism everywhere. The few who had doubts kept them in their own minds and produced them later. On the barracks, on the tramcars and other vehicles were chalked up such phrases as "Now we will thrash them!" and "Gentlemen's excursion to Petrograd."

The Kaiser himself promised the nation that Germany would score a final victory before Christmas. "I am leading you on to glorious days," William II told his subjects. And they firmly believed him.

But they also believed that Germany, besides her great armies, had wonderful new types of weapons, all of which would make the enemy afraid. And, as to finance—well, as the Vice-Chancellor of Germany put it, "We are stronger than our opponents. We can shoot with silver bullets," longer than the British Empire.

Victories were reported from East and West. There was never a retreat, loss of a ship or material, or even of human lives. In fact Germany was victorious everywhere by land and sea.

The Germans could not understand the increasing hardships as the war went on. But they continued to believe the stories of victories, at the same time wondering why the war did not finish. The cost was tremendous, but it was a long time before the people began to complain. "We shall make the enemy pay every penny," they declared hopefully.

And to prevent this enthusiasm from evaporating, wages

were increased for the poorer classes. It was the middle class which gradually became poorer.

"We are sure of victory, though we can't say how long it will be," was the parrot cry towards the end. "Stick it out a little longer; we are not going to allow any devil to deprive us of our triumph."

Even as late as October, 1918, when the German General Staff knew that their armies were beaten, Hindenburg declared to the people that Germany was already victorious on the eastern front, and the end of the fighting on the western front was in sight with a great triumph for German arms.

We have already seen that the Revolution was really no revolution.

"Germany has not experienced a revolution," wrote Maximilian Harden, Germany's great publicist. "She has only fevered through a convulsion caused by over-exertion and fright. It was not the impetuous and ardent desire for liberty, self-determination and responsibility for the state ideal that overthrew the monarchy and erected in its place the republic, but the desire to mitigate the will of a world of enemies, and the hope thereby to secure less stringent terms of peace."

The present war is a continuation of that of 1914-18. The Revolution did not dissipate the war mentality of the German people. The men who directed the Government during the revolution period did so with the tacit consent of the Junkers and the Military party. While Germany was unprepared to continue the struggle it was necessary to mark time.

There were frequent changes of leadership, but only in a political sense, and those changes were merely stepping-stones to a military dictatorship which came finally when General von Schleicher became Chancellor and Hindenburg became President.

When the National-Socialist party captivated the masses the Militarists threw in their lot with the new movement because they saw its possibilities for fooling the people.

The Nazi movement eventually grew out of hand, but the Militarists were patient and prepared to wait. They viewed with satisfaction the growth of the various youth movements which were turning young men into soldiers. The Militarists knew that in the end they held all the trump cards, and were content to allow Hitler to be the figurehead until the time was ripe for them to take over.

Occasionally Hitler jumped over the traces, and the Militarists had to use a brake. It is said that military leaders like General von Fritsch were liquidated at the command of Hitler. It is more likely that his murder was instigated by other military officers either through jealousy or because he did not agree with the schemes that were contemplated.

It is inconceivable that the brains of one individual could have planned the gigantic coups carried out by the Germans since the outbreak of war. Even the devil, it must be presumed, occasionally consults his angels. Moreover, the Junkers are not happy to have an Austrian of Hitler's class telling them what they should do. The truth is that as long as "Mein Führer" is successful they will tolerate him, and use him for the creation of the Greater Germany to which they themselves hope to become heirs.

But woe betide Hitler if he makes a slip. Before the mob Hermann Goering pays extravagant tributes to Hitler. Privately he despises him. Goering would have no compunction in throwing over the Nazis if plans did not go smoothly. There have been times since the outbreak of war when he has played his high cards with the German people. He has even criticized the Nazi regime.

Yes, Goering is out for the greater spoils. Whether he

eventually supersedes Hitler remains to be seen. He may even pose as the saviour of the Reich should it become necessary for Germany to cry "Enough!"

Thus Hitler is the goat to be sacrificed in certain eventualities. "My time is short," he has declared more than once. Maybe it is shorter than he imagines.

I have endeavoured to show that the peace terms were not harsh enough. There are still many, however, who would try to convince us that if the Allies had held out the hand of friendship to Germany, the world would not have been plunged into another blood bath.

But the course of events since the Armistice prove without any doubt that military Germany was determined to arise out of its ashes; firstly for the purposes of revenge, and secondly to carry on the plan of world dominion. It was not until Hitler the demagogue came along and achieved the co-ordination of two paradoxes—nationalism and socialism—that the military juggernaut began to move with sinister and threatening momentum.

A Satanic finger has pointed the way to Prussia for a century and a half. She is the present-day type of that aggressive militarism that began with Babylon, and which has appeared in various phases and at various times in the history of the world. But it is not solely confined to Germany. The policies of other nations during the past twenty years clearly indicate where that aggressive militarism lies.

This war will see the end of aggressive militarism. Not because it will finally eliminate the warmongers—though it will go a long way towards that end—but because they will not have the wherewithal to make war.

Before this lunacy is finished most nations of the world will be bankrupt. The aggressive military Powers are crucifying themselves in their attempts to smash the democracies. If the aggressors prevail, it is certain that they will fight for the spoils among themselves like ravenous wolves.

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They may fly at each other's throats long before the issue can be seen.

They will never prevail, however. The pace of this war is more than mankind can stand. The peoples of the aggressor nations are not unanimously behind their leaders. They will exact a toll from those who have plunged them into this madness, and they who have taken up the sword will go down into oblivion in a welter of revolution, famine, pestilence and murder.

The lights are out, not only in Europe, but the whole world. Peoples are yoked to the military machine. When ruin and desolation have wrought their worst, and Moloch is satisfied with his millions of victims, there will come a time of enlightenment.

What of the Peace? Are there in the world minds great enough to deal with the problem? Must the next settlement be a more ignominious one for Germany?

The world was not ready for the Fourteen Points in 1918. There were old scores to be written off. As a basis of a new settlement they will be more welcome. The peoples of the world will see to it themselves, for aggressive militarism will be dead, and Prussianism as recumbent as Frederick the Great.

The making of a just peace is going to be hard. There can be no Versailles. For such a conference would be like a board of directors declaring a dividend on the blackened ruins of their factory. The Hall of Mirrors has ghastly reflections, too gruesome to revive.

The task of restoring peace will go to the nations who have come best out of the catastrophe. Needless to say they will be the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America.

And if I had the choosing of a man for the mighty job of leader in the great work that man would be President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Let us have a Peace of Washington!